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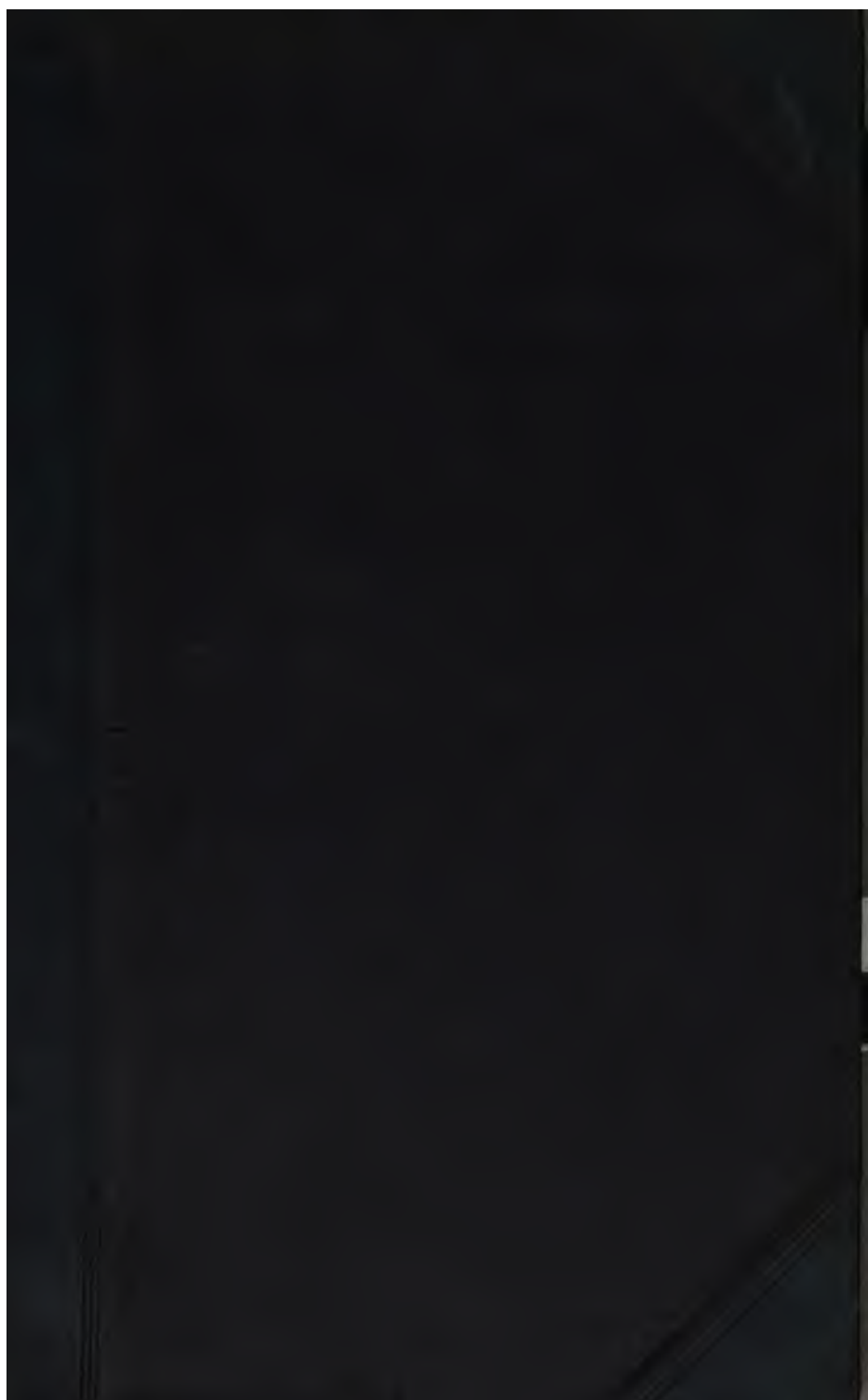
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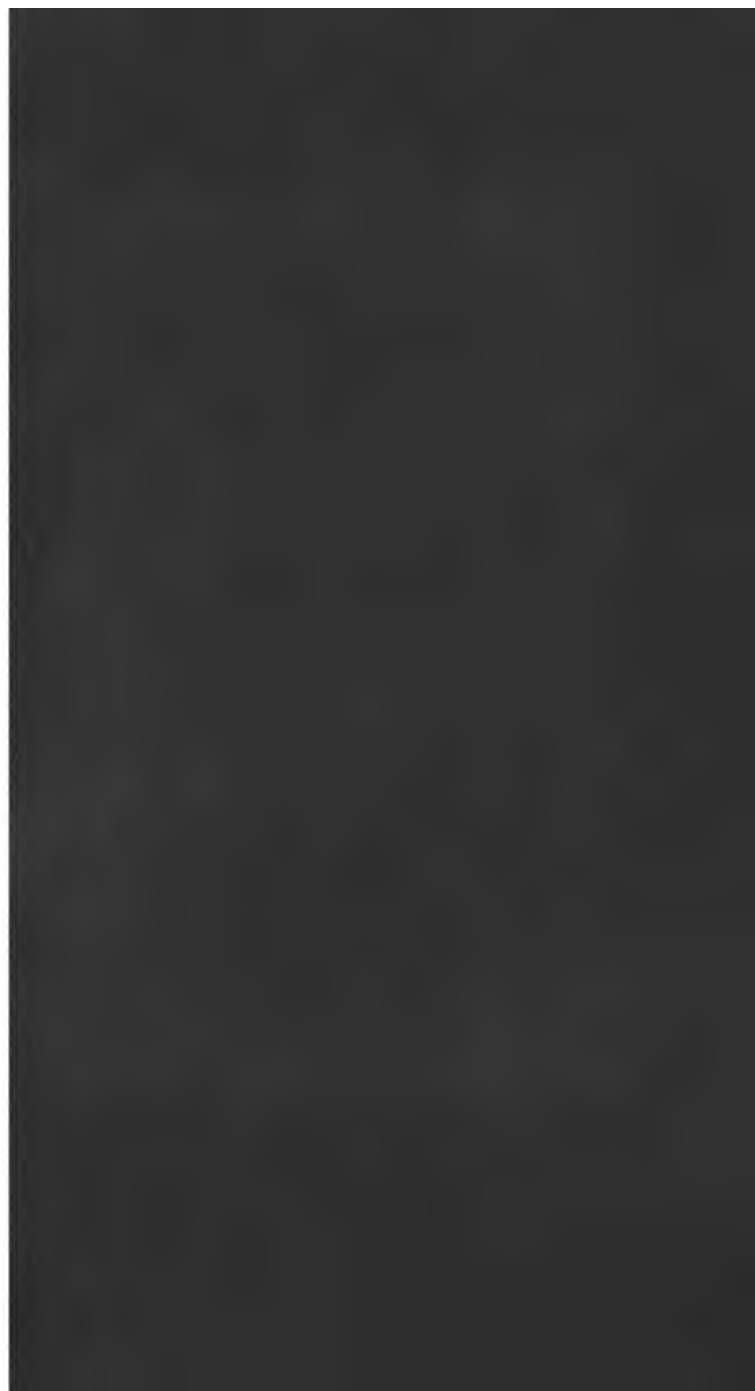
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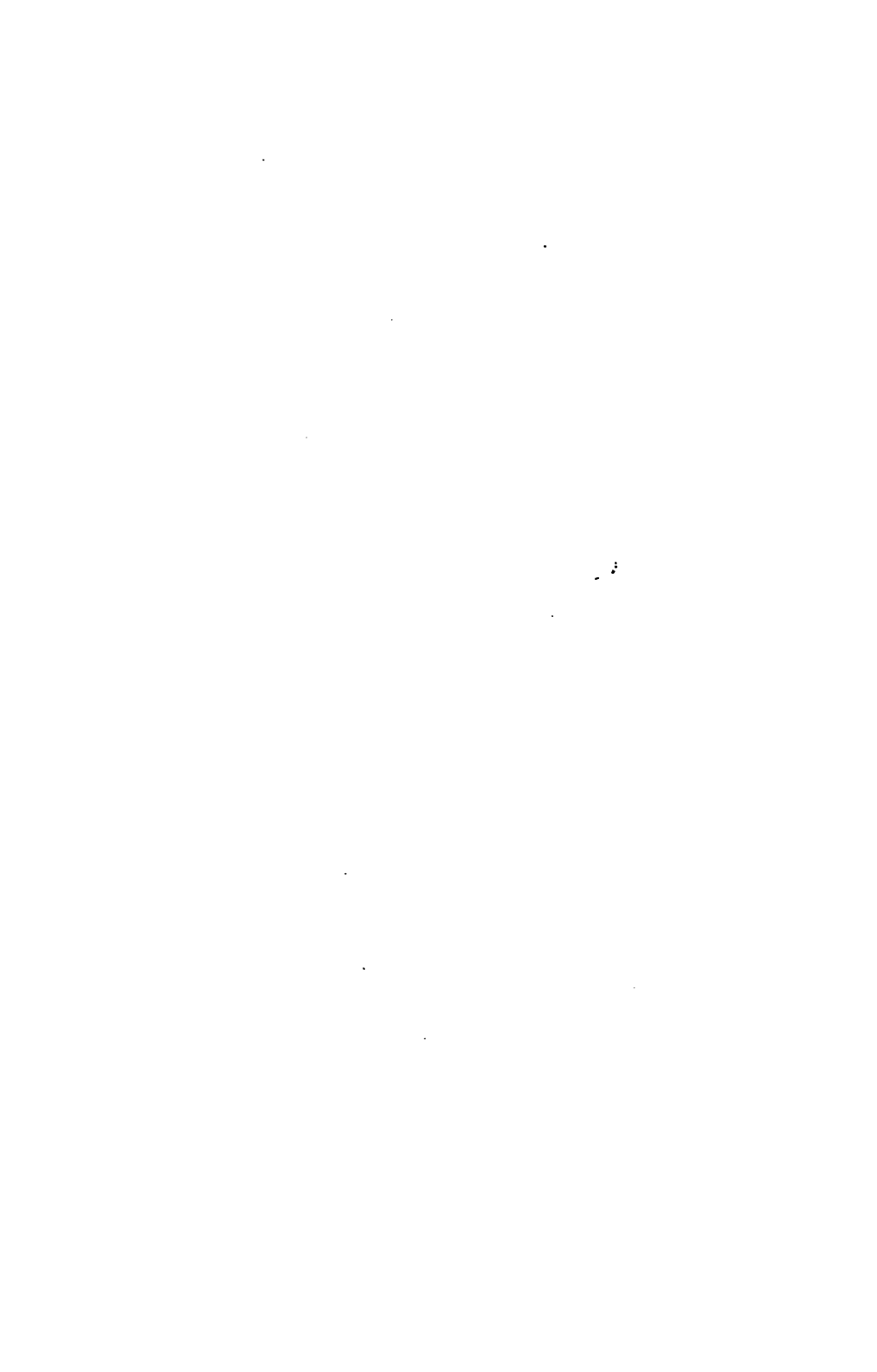


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THE  
INVISIBLE HAND.

A TALE.

---

INVISIBILIA NON DECIPIUNT.

Τὸν γὰρ ἀόρατον οὐδεὶς ὁρᾷ ἐκαστίηται.

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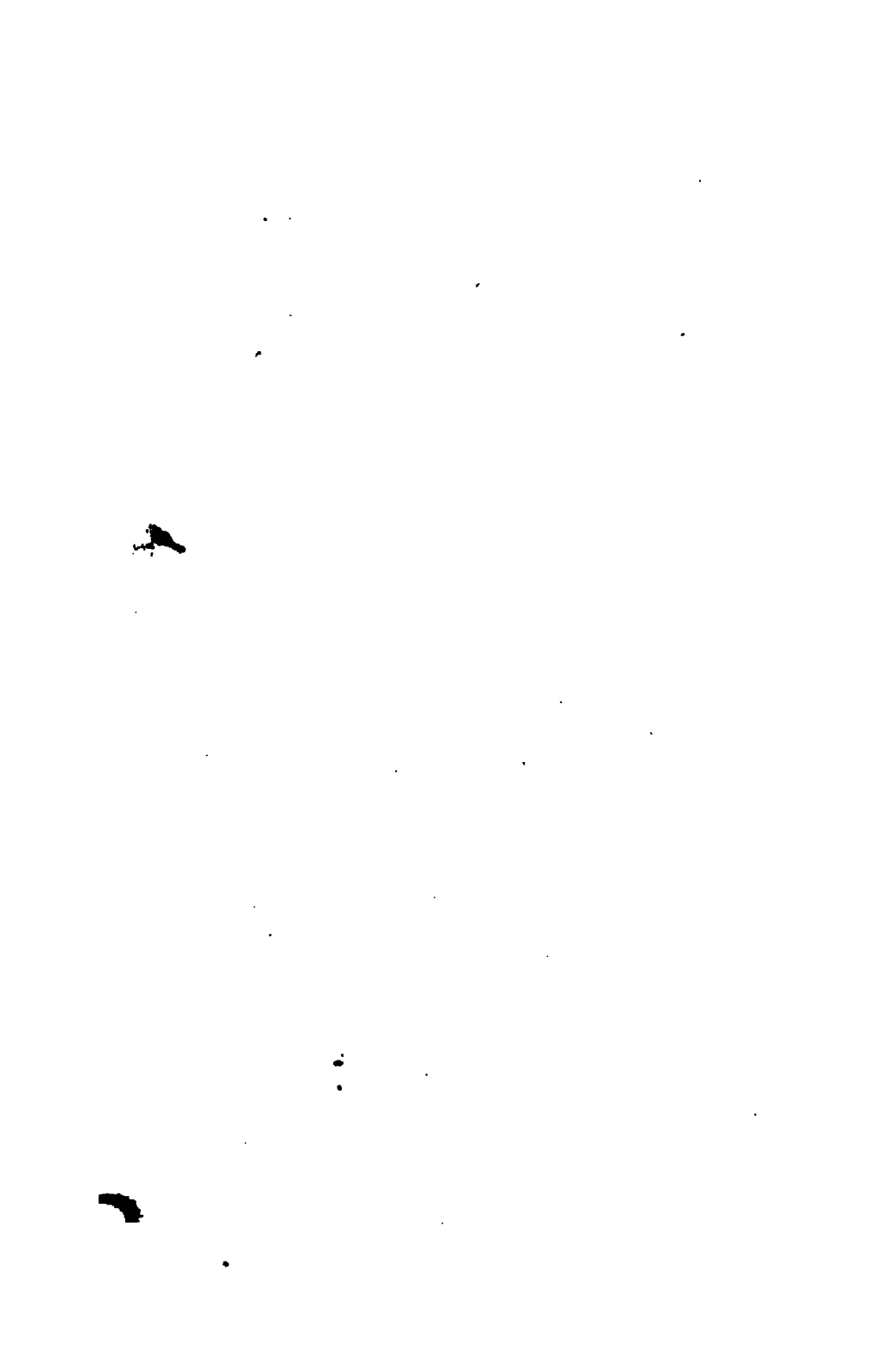
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THE  
INVISIBLE HAND.

---

CHAP. I.

---

This is no mortal business—nor no *hand*  
That the earth owns.—

SHAKSPEARE.

---

I RECOLLECT hearing my father say, that  
it was with very considerable reluctance  
he took up his abode in the village where  
he long lived, and where he will be yet far  
longer remembered with gratitude and

reverence. But in this, as in every thing else, he yielded to convictions of duty, and bowed his inclination for the good of others. He was, indeed, one "who pleased not himself."

Yet had he much to attach him to the spot. Endowed with an exquisite taste for natural beauties, and by education and early habits formed for the improvement of retirement, he seemed made for the situation. Whenever a momentary sensation of discontent crossed his mind, or an inadvertent complaint escaped his lips, he would instantly controul these rising regrets, by a reference to certain principles which to me were then wrapt in mystery, and in their effect on him were magical. I have ample reason, however, to believe that he was too good a man to be addicted to necromancy.

The house in which he dwelt was in every respect suited to a person of his retired, yet social, disposition;—one less would have done for himself. I have often heard him say, he wished it were even larger for his friends. He was more attentive to its internal accommodations than to its outward appearance; as he thought that the daily comfort of the inhabitant ought not to be sacrificed to the transient delight of a casual passenger. He did not despise, but justly appreciated appearances.

Many years have rolled away since I visited this my natal spot:—still I have before me the charming scene.

The secluded hamlet which he “blessed, not burdened, with his residence,” was beautifully situated in a spacious valley

lying between two main roads to the metropolis, in that part of the kingdom where the indefatigable industry of man and the luxuriant liberality of nature have combined, as much as may be, to remove the primary curse with which the earth was visited. It seems, from some venerable oaks which yet remain, as though the entire vale had been once covered with an extensive wood. Agriculture has changed the aspect and use of much land in this island, but of none more than that about my native place. My father's influence was exerted to encourage the plantation of trees. The mind is naturally led to approve of this; that as in society, so on the ground, as one generation passeth away, another may come. This picturesque scene was enlivened and enriched by a small river, which silently winds its course through

the whole extent of the vale; and to the continued innocence of the dwellers on its banks, an attempt to render it navigable has happily proved abortive. Alas! that improvements in science and commerce should tend to deteriorate moral character! It would not have been so, had not the fruit of that tree been gathered which brought misery into our world, as an inseparable attendant on knowledge.—By this meandering stream my father was wont to wander much alone; for, as far as I can remember, there was a placid and pleasing melancholy in his manners and appearance, which seemed to mark him as the most adapted of human beings to dwell in this sequestered spot: or whether it is, that with the present temper of my mind all that scenery appears clad in sombre tints, I cannot decide. Frequently we impute

that to the spectacle which may belong to the sight; and ascribe that to the object which is really the defect of the visual organ.

This early impression concerning his make of mind was confirmed by the following circumstance. When my mother, in the decline of life, was reading the poems of a Northern Bard; at these lines,

“E'en strange vicissitudes amused his soul :  
And if a sigh would sometimes intervene,  
And down his cheek a tear of pity roll,  
A sigh, a tear so sweet, he *wish'd* not to controul :”

she exclaimed, “That reminds me of ---!”  
she let the rest of her thought die in silence; and I imagined she referred to him whom she never ceased to mourn with all the tenderness of a woman, but whose loss she sustained with all the for-

titude of a Christian. I have often seen her weep, but never heard her complain, when she alluded to his revered memory. She never considered that sorrow genuine which was clamorous. Persons seldom talk much about that which deeply distresses them. The nightingale invariably pauses in her plaintive notes, on perceiving she is overheard: in solitude she pours forth her most melting lays. There was a calm and retired dignity in the grief of my surviving parent. She acted wisely, on becoming a widow, to quit that residence where all things tended to renew her sadness:—not that she would retreat from the path of duty, however difficult or gloomy, but she equally avoided nourishing her depression. Pensive satisfactions are bewitchingly pleasant. Like cordials, they enervate and debase. It is matter of frequent and unfeigned regret



that I do not more resemble this excellent woman. Since her translation into a better world, my sensations have been mingled with feelings of remorse. Her counsels and cautions are recollected: her *living* example was not duly prized. In subsequent seasons of doubt and perplexity, I would have given the world, if mine, for an hour's interview. Not that I slighted her directions: she was my model. I cherish her memory.

" I lov'd, *but not enough*, the gentle hand  
That rear'd me. At a thoughtless age allur'd  
By many a gilded folly, I renounc'd  
Her sheltering side, and wilfully forewent  
That converse, which I now regret in vain."

•

My parents were most colloquial during the evening, while they sipped the infusion of that herb "which cheers, but not inebriates." The interval of twilight

was devoted to intellectual amusement and edification. On these occasions my father allowed my sister Harriet to sit on his knee. I was placed on a cushion at their feet, while my mother nursed her youngest daughter. I have since learnt, that the topics *accidentally* introduced were designed for our entertainment and profit. No burden was placed on our memory. Some short lively anecdote preceded and sweetened their moral reflections. Their favourite sentiment was most frequently illustrated. When very young, I knew all the circumstances of Anacreon's death; and had learnt to distinguish the penalty due to his licentious impiety, from an *unlucky* or *unfortunate* occurrence. The story of the Roman Capitol delivered by the cackling of geese was often asked for by us. Never did these little parties break up without his

earnest prayer that we might, even in the most trivial accidents of life, discern and acknowledge that a gracious and invisible Power was engaged for our protection and defence.

My tender mother's customary assent to these petitions was a sigh or a tear; anticipating, perhaps, the event which not long after did occur. Nor do I think, but for this affecting bereavement, that these instructive scenes would have been so indelibly imprinted on my memory. I was too young to enter fully into all that took place on that distressing day. Towards evening, my beloved father, who had been long unwell, summoned his whole family around his dying bed. I can recall little more, than that he sat up, supported by pillows; and though he looked extremely weak and pallid, there was an

unusual composure apparent on his countenance. He embraced each of us in succession ; and after, with a smile of tenderness, giving us his parting blessing, bade us adieu. --- At this my mother was overwhelmed. --- Recovering himself, he said, " My love, weep not. It is the same *kind hand !*" --- I thought that, unnoticed by us, my mother had laid her hand on his panting bosom. The professional attendant imputed the expression to delirium. A pious domestic supposed he beheld some vision of Glory, unfolded to his waning sight. The companion of his life, and the partner of his sorrows and joys, alone understood his meaning. Since that period, I also have been initiated into these mysteries ; and, with daily solicitude, desire that my end may be, like that of this perfect and upright man,—Peace.

## CHAP. II.

---

If ever thou hast felt another's pain ;  
 If ever, when he sigh'd, hast sigh'd again ; -  
 If ever on thy eye-lid stood the tear  
 That Pity had engender'd ;—drop one here.

COWPER.

---

**C**ONSOLATIONS are never justly appreciated, until adversity has, in full measure, been allotted and endured. Principles, however excellent, are little better than happy prejudices, before trial. It is the intricate navigation, or the stormy wind and tempest, which puts the mariner's skill and fortitude to the test. I should

congratulate a rescued sailor less on his escape from danger, than on the calm resolution he evinced during the raging of the storm.

The moss had not yet filled up the inscription on my father's tomb—one of those marbles which do not perpetuate falsehood; nor had we been long settled in our new residence; before the clouds again gathered over us, and threatened to burst on our household with renovated fury.

As though favoured with second sight, my bereaved parent foresaw the approaching calamity. Whether conscious, that though the tap-root of her attachment to the present state was broken by previous dispensations, yet that she still loved the world too much, I do not know.

Bodily infirmities often presage a change of weather. The temper of our own hearts may as surely predict variations in our affairs.

Like an ancient Seer, she ascended more frequently that hallowed mount whence she could at once best discern, and be the better prepared for, coming events. At length others beheld, and perhaps disregarded, the rising cloud: it was not bigger than a man's hand. She now addressed herself to the more difficult part of her maternal duties. Girding up the affections of her mind, she restrained her feelings before us. With true loyalty she ran before her Monarch's chariot, knowing that the way was paved with love.

The *retrospect* affects me of feebleness, more than even the *prospect* or

*reality* moved her. Her affliction was not unlike that which one whom she much resembled was visited with—the lovely and dignified female who dwelt among her own people, and who mildly replied to a sympathizing prophet, “All is well !”

When my widowed mother left the village of our nativity, she retired to a western county, where lay her own paternal inheritance, confirmed to her by her husband's arrangements, and rendered more pleasant by ampler resources, and by the living representatives of him who was not. One of these, her chief comforts, she was now called to resign to Him from whom she had received so much good.

Strangers used invariably to observe, that my younger sister bore the most striking resemblance to her father. Though of



the other sex, she was the Benjamin of the family—the “little one.” I have fresh in my recollection the circumstance of my father’s reading to us the history of Joseph. When he came to the pathetic appeal of Judah—himself a parent—to the lord of Egypt, in behalf of his youngest brother; and read, “If he should leave his father, his father would die;” his eyes, suffused with tears, were fixed on my little sister. He was spared the sufferings he then anticipated.

His relict saw much of mercy in the *arrangement* of her troubles. She was glad that he was not called to participate in her present bereavement; she was grateful that previous discipline had in some measure prepared her for this heavy stroke. She would enlarge on that mercy that caused an interval between her sorrows.

"After these things the Lord tried Abraham"—is the prelude to that affecting story of The father of the Faithful offering up his child of promise and of hope.

I was not old, but well do I remember her saying, on the day when all that was mortal of my endeared sister was committed to the tomb: "He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind: He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."—The figures pleased me at the time: the truth, and the recollection when they were spoken, have since consoled me, in innumerable instances.

Every attention which affluence could command, all that medical skill could devise, and every change of air that

\* Gen. xxii. 1.

was recommended, proved unavailing. While the child lived, my mother prayed, and wept, and fasted; but on the night of her departure, as she sat by the bed of sickness and of death, the first intimation that the gentle spirit had flown, was from the maternal lip. She smote her agitated bosom, and mildly said, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight."—Former feelings might associate themselves with present sensations; for she calmly added, "I see His *hand* in this event;" and left the chamber for her closet.

Throughout that entire day of silence and gloom which followed, there was observable in her whole deportment a suppressed agitation, an internal conflict. But at the time of the evening sacrifice, when, as her custom was, she led the devotions

of the family, her whole heart was poured forth before Him who knew her soul in adversity. The intense breathings of her spirit for us were chastened by the accents of submission. She commended us each to God; and with the heroism of unaffected piety, assumed the words of the blessed Virgin: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord! Be it unto me according to thy word!" She resigned us into the hands of Sovereign Mercy: "Behold! here am I and the children which thou hast *spared* me." Her manner most impressed us, as she repeated that stanza in some old poet, who himself had drunk of the brook by the way:

"Father! I bless thy gentle hand.

How kind is thy chastising rod!"

Time and repeated changes have in some measure obliterated these recollec-

tions from my mind : at least, if the remembrance is still vivid, like the luminous rays of a declining sun, it is softer and milder than I could have anticipated.

Grey hairs, and those alike occasioned and accompanied by sorrow, some years after announced, that my remaining parent would not be much longer a pilgrim in this vale of tears. I comforted myself by knowing that she had not attained to the years of her fathers. I rejoiced with trembling at her evident maturity in grace. Rich as autumnal fruits were her counsels ; but they were, from their mellowed ripeness, proof that her year was in the decline. At this distance of time, I envy the frame of her mind as the winter of death approached. She died in the month of November. That year we had had but little rain ; and

a small rivulet, which ran in the paddock before our abode, was nearly dry. The last time she left the house, and as I drew her round the field, "Charles, my dear," said she, "I am cheered in the persuasion that the brook I shall soon pass will be like this. I have often walked hither, and meditated on His love who resorted for me, and such as me, to the brook Kedron: and sustained by his hand, 'I fear no evil.'"—I made no reply; but an invisible witness heard my prayer, and I trust has it still on record:—"Let me die the death of my righteous mother!"

The principles of attraction are not only those of natural philosophy. The nearer she got to the higher world, the more rapid was her flight. Her departure was always associated with the thought of re-union with her husband and her

daughter. She deemed this no superstitious weakness; and would say, "The same hand which implanted in my breast a supreme love to the Saviour, gave me conjugal and maternal attachments."

In this frame of mind the midnight cry could have no terrors for her. As Harriet and myself sat by her bedside, we perceived her countenance suddenly irradiated; and with tones of unwonted cheerfulness, she exclaimed, "*Thou art with me!*"

The fabled song of the dying bird had its spiritual exemplification. I dare not trust my heart with a recital of that night, much to be remembered.

"But, oh! the thought that *thou* art blest, and *he*;—  
That thought is joy, arrive what will to me."

## CHAP. III.

---

Virtue is like a rich stone,—best plain set. And surely virtue is best in a body that is comely, though not of delicate features; and that hath rather dignity of presence than beauty of aspect. That is the best part of beauty which a picture cannot express; no, nor the first sight of the life.

LORD BACON.

---

MY sister and I were now left alone. Though young, we already felt the force of that inquiry—the more so from our family habits—“Where is the world into which we were born?” No year, or even week, had passed, but had yielded convincing proof that HE who was our parents’ best friend, had been the friend of their orphaned posterity. Trivial as our



affairs might appear to others, or in relation ; to us they were of great importance. Life is made up of little things. Sometimes, indeed, our spirits were sadly sunk ; but I think the prevailing temper of our minds, as was really the fact, was best expressed by words we frequently adopted :—"Thou *maintainest* our lot : the lines are fallen to us in pleasant places ; we have a goodly heritage." If our prosperity did not roll in a rapid and confluent stream, yet our lot was maintained. If our cup did not run over, yet it was full.

Grief and bereavement tend to endear such as remain to each other. Adverse dispensations are but as the shade to the lighter and more brilliant parts of life's varied picture. We found it so. Harriet looked up to me as her protector.

"*A* brother—is born for adversity." Her emphasis on the article was very expressive. There was not intended any invidious reflection on brethren—on numbers, but a persuasion dwelt on her mind, that an *only* brother could cherish sympathies which *several* could not.

Residing so long together, we had insensibly assimilated. Our tastes, principles, pursuits, and habits, bore a considerable resemblance. As trees planted in the same aspect will, by exposure to the wind, have the like obliquities, so our very errors and weaknesses were similar. If Harriet's view of fraternal comfort and counsel is incorrect, I feel able to vindicate my sentiments in reference to an *only* sister; or if a further alteration is permitted, I would repeat what I have often felt—*A* sister is *spared* for adversity.

Harriet had inherited her father's person ; but her mother's mind predominated. Comely and elegant in her form, she was far too dignified to be pretty. In her presence, there was something which beauty has not. All who were in her society were won by gradual and imperceptible advances.

The best British Queen called a fair exterior a Letter recommendatory. To preserve the metaphor, the hand in which my sister's was written was like her own penmanship,—legible, terse, and fair. It was not *Italian*, but the Roman letter. There may be finer writing, but this answered the truest purpose,—it spoke, it could at once be known and read of all.

In her countenance there was indeed, occasionally, a pensiveness which I have

regretted. *Spectators*, who intermeddled not with her private history, might for a moment imagine she was discontented. *Hearers* never formed this opinion: her conversation illumined her countenance: then she appeared in brightness. A passing cloud gives an inexpressible beauty to a moonlight scene.

Attached as her mother was to sentiments which are derived from The best of Books, and which have stood the test of every age, she could not be uninstructed on domestic affairs. Her arrangements were those of the mind. Liberal from principle, she was economical from conscience. She had the spirit to spend, and the resolution to spare.

Religion, however, was her masterpiece. Other excellencies were the ex-

quisite beauties of the finest landscape: her piety, the sun which rendered them visible, gave them life and light, gilding the whole view. On one of those many evenings which, according to the customs of the parental roof, we spent in easy and unrestrained conversation, we were unwittingly led to topics which recalled days that were long since passed: the shadows of distant events glided before us.

In these retrospections, a similarity of thought was inevitable. The fire by which we sat no longer flamed, but burnt with a regular and clear effulgence. Thus our conversation subsided into the calm of tranquil musing. As by mutual consent, we became silent.

The pilgrimage of our hearts had led us to the same shrine. As though first at

the sepulchre—like some holy females of old,—“Charles,” said she, “how inimitably correct were the representations of life given us by our parents. I have sometimes regretted that we so rarely recall their counsels, and in our *minor* concerns consider them as still directing us.” “True, my dear Harriet, we do err,” replied I, “in not tracing the Divine hand in the smallest incidents of life. We ask support in great exigencies; we resort to Him when all refuge fails. How great his mercy, that then he does not spurn us from his foot.”—“His thoughts are not as ours, Charles,” said she, “nor his ways as ours. The hairs of our head are all numbered: his kindly attentions to us are more minute than even our own solitudes.” “Yes, Harriet,” I said, “we have indeed reason, abundant reason, to adore the goodness which feeds even the sparrows;

and the grace which proposes, and replies to, that question concerning his rebellious but ransomed creatures—"Are ye not of more value than sparrows?"—"Those are cheering words," rejoined my sister, "in themselves; but in what melodious sounds must they have fallen on the ear, when first uttered by one 'into whose lips grace was poured.'" She meant Him who was 'altogether lovely, and the chief among ten thousand;' and on whose charms she was always ready to expatiate; as having 'the government on his shoulders.' It was her favourite topic. She spoke however, just then, so like my mother, and at the moment a gentle flame rising from the coals threw such a dim religious light on a family picture on the wall, that I exclaimed, "O, that those lips had language!" "They have," said Harriet: "though dead, he lives again." I now un-

derstood her. Our mental glance was fixed on the same glorious spectacle. Our thoughts soared to the higher world. Her's, indeed, were nearest the throne.—I meant, the spirits of just persons made perfect;—she, the Mediator of the New Covenant.

We had not long indulged in this train of meditation, before One joined us whose presence cheered and instructed. At length He so made himself known to us, that though we saw him not, yet we rejoiced with joy unspeakable.

From these delightful reveries we were roused by the entrance of the servant, who inquired if we would have candles. We both replied affirmatively; for once giving an order which we wished to be disregarded. It was, indeed, later than we had supposed.



Better fitted for the engagements of devotional retirement, we had yet a diminished portion of time for those duties and delights.

X I could not consider either the conversation, or the circumstance that our Evening Lesson at the domestic sacrifice was the last chapter of St. Luke, to be wholly accidental. I was superstitious enough to imagine that the coincidence was more than ideal. Harriet said, "This is the finger of God."—For some days I kept this saying in my recollection, and pondered it in my heart.

## CHAP. IV.

---

Does not this hand rule all things, and intend  
The least of our concerns?—since from least  
The greatest oft originate.

COWPER.

---

**T**HE month of May this year was unusually fine: and on one of the most lovely mornings that ever broke on a fallen world, we proposed relaxing from our daily studies and customary pursuits, to enjoy the sweets of Spring in a short excursion. The azure sky was here and there intercepted by a silvery cloud, which seemed as the ornamental pearls worn by the placid horizon. Gentle zephyrs blew upon the newspaper as it lay on the break-

fast table, which had been placed near the window, thrown open to admit the breath of morn.

The small plantation which obscured our dwelling from the road was filled with warbling songsters ; who seemed to participate in the universal gladness, while they added to the joys of others.

Thus in this life, so manifold in change, it is happily ordained, that where true enjoyment is possessed, it is even involuntarily communicated — communicated without impoverishing the possessor. Our ride was over the neighbouring downs. Harriet never looked better than on horseback. Perhaps the small share of vanity which existed in her bosom was cherished by knowing it.

At twelve o'clock we mounted our horses ; and the groom, who was also gardener (for our establishment was not large), having talked much, when he received his orders, of his cucumber-beds, and enlarged on the advantage of paying them much attention on so fine a day, I dispensed with his presence, and we sat off alone.

" We shall be home by *three*, Thomas," said I, as the servant let go my stirrup. My companion's galloway seemed to grudge the short detention occasioned by my mounting. Something whispered me, " Perhaps not so soon." I was not however conscious of a feeling more censurable than inconsideration.

" The weather is really warm," said my sister, as we trotted over the greensward. " We'll slacken our pace," replied I : and

crossing the road, gently ambled under the shade of a rising plantation which belted the park of Mr. Stephens, a gentleman who had lately become a resident in our neighbourhood, and whom we knew only by report. We had heard that he was well descended, had been liberally educated; and after successful mercantile engagements, had retired to the beautiful mansion he had lately purchased. Association with the world had given polish to his manners. In early life he had spent some years on the European continent, and in the West Indies, where lay his paternal estate.

The matrimonial connection he had formed was with a lady somewhat his superior in rank, but not richly endowed. He had a numerous and engaging family; and all appeared disposed to take large

draughts of present felicity, such as they enjoy who do not aspire to higher satisfactions. It had been source of some regret, when Mr. Stephens bought the estate, that we were not likely to acquire an addition to our confined circle of visitors. On neither side was there much disposition to cultivate acquaintance. There is mental as well as magnetic repulsion. We had welcomed them to the manor-house. They had courteously called, and admired our snug retreat.

We had now reached the vista leading directly to the house, when a flock of wheatears suddenly flew from the ground; and startling my sister's nag, he sprang forward. The protruding branch of an oak struck her elbow, so that she lost the reins, and was thrown.

"I hope you are not hurt!" said I, as I raised her from the ground. "Not much," she replied, with looks which contradicted the assertion. My alarm was greater, as she proposed to walk home, and send the servant for the animal. Her head had received a slight contusion, and she was bewildered.

By one of those strange impulses which influence the conduct of the brute creation, the horses, instead of bounding over the plain, entered a gate which stood open, and ran immediately before the mansion. Mr. Stephens was at that moment seated at his study window, which commanded the lawn where these liberated animals began to graze. He sent directly to our assistance, and himself came to offer us the accommodations of his dwelling. Before his arrival, my sister was

considerably recovered. She had said, "Charles! this fall could not be a matter of mere chance."

I led her to Mr. Stephens' friendly abode. He hurried on before; and his lady and her two daughters paid her the most assiduous attentions—evinced the greatest sympathy and tenderness.

With a delicacy which proved their knowledge of the best manners, our continuance was not pressed. Their carriage was cheerfully ordered, and we entered our own doors as the clock struck *five*. In that note of time I heard language unperceived by others.

Our medical visitor soon arrived. He assured me there was no ground for alarm; and declared it was a most *lucky* circum-



stance that the *unfortunate accident* took place so near the spot where assistance could be procured.

As Mr. Johnson left the parlour, Harriet observed, "How different are his sentiments and language from ours!" But as if apprehensive that even such a remark might express more of censure than compassion, she added, "Who has made us to differ?" She ever commiserated those who knew not the HAND that smote or sustained them.

Pity is due to such as are blind to the operations of a gracious, though unseen, hand. Happy is he who can live under this conviction! "In trouble, Harriet," I replied, "we have no other resource; in sickness no other solace; in dejection no other hope; and in death no other comfort."

I learnt much of my sister's previous benevolence, during the time she was confined to the house. Works of love and mercy concealed from human notice, are most appreciated by Him who, though invisible, can see in secret.

Harriet had forgotten many of her charitable deeds. One day, as she reclined on the sofa, and I informed her that the widow Aslett "had sent her duty and thanks for the garments given her just before Miss's accident," my sister's oblivion threw light on that address of the merciful JUDGE to his commended servants. Their reply seemed her's: "When saw we thee in distress, and ministered to thee?"

As she appeared to have forgotten the event, I could not but reflect on that mercy which has said, "My thoughts are

not your thoughts : I am not unrighteous to *forget* your work and labour of love, in that ye have ministered to the saints."

Our village had its full quota of paupers. Harriet had both visited their abodes and relieved their necessities. Her pecuniary aid was accompanied with counsels, admonitions, and prayer. She excelled in dispensing her bounty through secret channels. To many in destitute circumstances she denied nothing but her name.

Rivers and lakes which fertilize and embellish the face of the earth have received ample notice. They have been illustrated by the pens of Statesmen, and the song of Poets. These are supplied by the hidden springs and unperceived currents of subterraneous water. My sister's charity, like the mercy of heaven,

was to be seen rather in its effects than its source. Too often, alas ! the returns she met from some who partook of her liberality, and verbally acknowledged their obligation, resembled those which are rendered to Him whose tender mercies are over all his works.

Mr. Stephens and his amiable daughters frequently visited us. Sympathy is an attractive grace : it is the loadstone of the social world.

Friendships formed in adversity are like the forests of the North : if they do not rapidly flourish, they ultimately yield the most useful and durable materials.

The family at the manor-house had much to learn. My library offered them books of a new order. Harriet's patience,

resignation, and cheerfulness, under indisposition far more protracted in its duration than had been at first apprehended, confirmed the fact, that the Works lent them to peruse were not those of fiction.

Minds debauched and debilitated by Works of romance do not easily digest sound and wholesome truths. Worth of character is the best antidote to the poison of prejudice : it courts, and will bear inspection. Harriet's cheerful piety and circumspect practice confirmed the representation of books. They had a juster idea of graphical descriptions, when accompanied with a *moral* map. In academies of the Arts, rules are invariably exemplified by models. Experience establishes the propriety of this method. He who gave the most correct and efficient theory for the regulation of the life, left

also an example that we should follow his steps.

The universal declension in the virtues of a great people, arose, and was consummated, by the disjunction of that which should always be united. They received instruction of those who *said*, but *did not*.

## CHAP. V.

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He is not of his wish possess'd.

There 's something wanting still, to make him bless'd.

FRANCIS:

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OUR annual visit to the metropolis was generally during the winter season. This year our stay was unusually short. Friends were more than wontedly kind: and observing, in all probability, less vivacity in my manners than formerly, they exceeded their previous efforts to please.

A few weeks may appear tedious; they cannot be long;—the small subdivisions of a life which is justly compared to a transitory vapour—a fugitive cloud.

Never did I reflect on my behaviour with less satisfaction than on this occasion. I appeared ungrateful. Had I really been so, I should have detested myself. On no former visit did I so sensibly feel their attentions. With all things and persons conducing to my felicity, I was unhappy.

I had not my distress *mitigated* by my sister's society : her presence indeed for the first time added to my sorrow. To my surprize, she had somewhat reluctantly left home. Her partial recovery was the assigned cause of her unwillingness. Seeing me anxious however, she assented ; and I rejoiced that my female Mentor would accompany me to a place which ever had charms for me, like the Isle of Calypso to the youthful Telemachus.



To render her unhappy by sympathy, was the return I made her for compliance. Every aspect in which I looked at my conduct rendered me less amiable. At length we prepared for our return: and although home was, during our entire absence, the promised balm to allay my throbbing anguish, I could not account for the fact,—it seemed to offer, as I approached it, but a cheerless prospect.

Harriet said but little to console. I feared, when she did, that I replied with less fraternal courtesy and kindness than formerly. My reflections and remarks were all grave, if not gloomy; and very tender were the observations I made on the vanity of the world, and the happiness of such as had left it.

Much of this peevishness with life

passes current for maturity in better principles. Poor Harriet anticipated that my continuance in this world would be short.

In the chariot, as we returned, I amused, or rather I tried to amuse myself with a small collection of Poems ; for all at once I had become wonderfully enamoured of that species of writing. I always enjoyed it, as the *fruit* of literature—as the dessert after a meal. To make it the only food of the mind, evinced a depraved taste, a diseased and vitiated palate.

I had turned over a fresh page, and read,—

“ Condemn'd to Hope's delusive mine,  
 As on we toil from day to day ;  
 By sudden blast, or slow decline,  
 Our social comforts drop away.”

"How true is that!" I exclaimed. My sister thought I alluded to the last lines. I meant only the first. And while she expected a sacred comment on man's mortality, I began a disquisition on the fallacy of hope, and the treachery of our fondest expectations. As the innocent are seldom suspicious, my sister could not imagine that any one had thwarted my wishes.

When we reached our beloved home, the cloud on my mind, instead of dissipating, threatened more heavily to oppress. Mr. Stephens' family being at Bath might, in part, occasion this. The contrast from daily society, to the total failure of foreign resources, might produce dissatisfaction.

I proposed passing a few days in that cheerful city. Harriet delicately, I thought

fastidiously, opposed this plan. She had reasons which I did not surmise. I yielded to her opinions with an ill-concealed reluctance.

The day of Sabbath rest had always been estimated by us as the best boon of celestial mercy. It is that which renders all its other bestowments available ;—the connecting link between human necessity and exhaustless liberality,—between the distress of man, and the tender compassions of heaven. The light of that morn at length returned ; “ but not with it light unto my mind.” No external or inward sorrow detained us at any time from the customary services of the hallowed temple. The more inveterate the disease, the greater need of assistance. When beaten off from other refuges, *that* asylum is most necessary.

Had I even before questioned the truth of that cheering assurance given in the book of unfailing veracity, "There I will meet with you," I had this day lost my scepticism. Our reverend instructor, through illness, was detained from the sacred desk. The officiating priest was necessarily unacquainted with the state of my mind. The exordium to his discourse had an allusion which prepared my heart for a reception both of admonitory and consolatory instruction. Designing doubtless to allay our anxiety, or to fit our minds for all the Divine disposals respecting our beloved shepherd, whose indisposition had during the night increased to the alarm of his flock, he expatiated largely on the great argument of Eternal providence.

With meek humility he confessed be-

fore the Supreme his need of spiritual illumination ; and implored it, in those words of our immortal Bard :—

— “ Celestial Light !

Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers  
Irradiate ; there plant eyes ; all mists from thence  
Purge and disperse ; that I may see and tell  
*Of things invisible to mortal sight.*”

The appropriate introduction of these lines, repeated with a feeling and propriety which evinced the sincerity of his heart, riveted my attention.

When he admonished the discontented, I bowed to the equity of reproof. “ Inordinate fears, as to the result of our schemes, evinced,” said he, “ something radically wrong.” He so described the tumult and insurrection of that heart, whose motto was not “ Thy will be done,”

that I now began to discern the error and folly of my temper, and for the moment could subjugate every rebellious disposition.

From this day my spirits recovered. I re-assumed a cheerful aspect, and determined, on some suitable occasion, to make those reparative apologies due to my sister for my past behaviour. Such an opportunity soon presented itself. She did not comprehend my purpose, nor could accept explanations when not required. I, indeed, found that the infelicity I had lamented, and the change of deportment I had bewailed, were perceived by none but myself. I was conscious that I had been unhappy, and ill-tempered, and suspicious, and discontented, and frequently absent in company. Some such sensations, although unmingled with

guilt, were perhaps in our first father's breast, when even in Paradise. Mercy and Wisdom saw it ; and affirmed, " It is not good for man to be alone."

This one sentence explains all the mystery of my conduct. I believed *marriage* might have many pains. I knew *celibacy* had no pleasures.



## CHAP. VI.

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A principal fruit of Friendship is the ease and discharge of the fulness of the heart, which passions of all kinds do cause and induce. To a true friend you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatsoever lieth upon the heart to oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift or confession.

BACON.

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ANTIQUITY has not a shrewder saying than the Greek adage, *Οἱ φίλοι οὐ φίλοι*. Surrounded as I was by numerous and affectionate friends, I yet wanted one to whom I could communicate certain secret sorrows, which had long preyed on my spirits, and concealed hopes which I occasionally ventured to indulge.

Sufficient reasons operated on my decisions to withhold even from Harriet these important sensations and wishes. Not that I suspected her fidelity to my interests; nor her kindly indulgence to my infirmities; much less the wisdom of her advice. In her I ever had found a tried and judicious counsellor. Indeed this was the cause of my reserve. I feared the advice she might give would be unpalatable.

The continued intercourse between our family and that of Mr. Stephens had proved to me a source of intellectual pleasure, and the occasion of painful solitudes.

I had no reason to conclude the welcome given me at the manor-house was less cordial than on our first acquaintance.

an undisguised disclosure of our future purposes." To my astonishment she confusedly replied; "My dear brother! I am indeed conscious of having withheld the affair too long from your knowledge." Not prepared for this answer, attended as it was with considerable agitation, "My dear Harriet," said I, "no reflection on your conduct was designed: I was going to confess—to ask your advice—to inquire how you would act in this interesting affair."—Now, as I had not told her what affair, this only added to her perplexity. The guilty, it is said, need no accusers. "True, Charles, it is most interesting; but I should not have taken any step without consulting you, my *only* adviser."—"I have taken no step, I assure you, Harriet," said I, somewhat warmly; "nor have I mentioned it to any one;—you are my *only* adviser."

Yet there was more restriction of manners. I had very frequently found the young ladies walking or reading with each other. Now they were invariably attended by their parents, or by a young gentleman their cousin, whose visits I deemed unusually protracted. He was now the guest of his uncle. I at length determined to break through every restraint, and to open my mind to my invaluable relative. This resolution being taken, at its execution elicited discoveries, and betrayed facts, of which I had not the most distant supposition.

"Harriet," said I, as we sat at table after the cloth was drawn, "I have been for some time past thinking on the character of true and unaffected friendship, which we feel and profess to each other, and have concluded that it comprehends

an undisguised disclosure of our future purposes." To my astonishment she confusedly replied; "My dear brother! I am indeed conscious of having withheld the affair too long from your knowledge." Not prepared for this answer, attended as it was with considerable agitation, "My dear Harriet," said I, "no reflection on your conduct was designed: I was going to confess—to ask your advice—to inquire how you would act in this interesting affair."—Now, as I had not told her what affair, this only added to her perplexity. The guilty, it is said, need no accusers. "True, Charles, it is most interesting; but I should not have taken any step without consulting you, my *only* adviser."—"I have taken no step, I assure you, Harriet," said I, somewhat warmly; "nor have I mentioned it to any one;—you are my *only* adviser."

It was soon found we mutually mistook each other's meaning: Harriet had determined to communicate to me her receipt of a highly-important letter, put into her hand two days before by Mrs. Duncombe. She had summoned resolution to tell me of its arrival, the same day that I gathered courage to acquaint her that I intended to write one. The objects were distinct: the subjects the same.

The reasons that the *amiable* cousin of the Misses Stephens was so much in our neighbourhood were now obvious. It is incredible how my feelings were changed towards him. In the morning of this very day I had regarded him with unkind suspicion, if not jealous aversion. It occurred to me, at this moment, that his interest and wishes would make

him subservient to mine. It grieved me to find his stay in the country would be so short. I had a hundred regrets that my conduct to him had been so coldly courteous. There had been less confidence and freedom between us than is common, when persons meet nearly of the same age, rank, and acquirements. He had felt my behaviour the more, as I had shewn the most marked and friendly attention to the younger Mr. Stephens, when for a few days he visited his paternal roof. I thought the latter would make my sister happy, if he would but have thought so too. I overlooked disparity of years, and many other objections. Indeed I fear I considered less Harriet's happiness, than that his attachment might favour my projects. A moral writer says, "No wise man was ever in love. If he is, I think it makes him act as a fool."

Such I seemed in my own estimate. I was comforted by hearing it described as an 'amiable weakness;' a term, if analysed, of nugatory, if not pernicious import.

The contents of Mr. Duncombe's letter were delicately communicated. Harriet's silence spoke her sentiments. True attachments, like the monarchs of Persia, affect, and are the more respected from, their retirement. I soon found he had reasons for esteeming her which would tend to consolidate and enrich the union of their hearts. To her he was remotely indebted for all that better light which sweetly beamed on his mind. Many profess a regard for good sentiments, to please their possessor. He, on the contrary, had revered, admired, and loved those principles which made my sister what she was. He embraced them,



not to gratify her, but to influence himself.

Harriet avowed that she was induced to view the circumstances of introduction, and subsequent beneficial intercourse, as far, very far, from fortuitous. Many apprehensions, lest she should mistake inclination for the direction she needed, and implored, arose in her mind.

My sister's confidence in me confounded and condemned me. Much did I regret that I had not spoken first—given her the earliest proof of my voluntary reliance. But all I did was wrong in itself, or wrongly timed. Even now I hesitated to reveal my hopes in their full extent. Thus was I my own foe. On stating my feelings to Harriet, she informed me that Mr. Duncombe had

mentioned with envy the favourable impressions I had made on his lovely cousin Emma. He had commiserated himself in having me for his enemy, while Mr. W. Stephens was so entirely the ally of his sister.

Matters now seemed propitious to my advances. When reason and religion are pioneers, affection will soon carry the point. The honest, yet refinedly cautious manner in which Emma permitted me to hope for happiness, raised her in my esteem beyond what I had thought possible. Convincing evidence was afforded, that guidance sought from the great Invisible had not been denied.

I left the manor-house overwhelmed with pathetic emotions. As I walked through the plantations, I involuntarily

exclaimed, "It is the same *kind hand*." My long-lost parents seemed to smile from heaven upon me. All around was agreeable. Every thing appeared to participate in my satisfactions.

Having reached home, I immediately retired to my unseen guide, to implore remission, and to offer praise. As one of old who prospered in a similar enterprise, I bowed down my head, and worshipped and blessed the Lord God of my father, who had led me in the right way\*.

\* Gen. xxiv. 48.

## CHAP. VII.

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It is a matter of sound consequence, that all duties of life are by so much better performed; and all its trials by so much better endured, by how much the man is more religious.

HOOVER.

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A FULL persuasion that something more than mere affection is necessary to matrimonial felicity, led me to improve the days of preliminary acquaintance to effecting a similarity of sentiment. Circumstances, which were not under her controul, had occasioned the beloved Emma to be but a novice in the most valuable of sciences. By the wisdom of my parents, and the interposition of an

invisible power, I had studied it from my youth up.

Her education had comprised every species of useful and ornamental knowledge, but that which alone gives real utility and brilliant beauty to acquirements. Attached and accustomed to reading, although she had perused many books, my library yet contained such as she had not heard of.

Ground newly tilled, or on which the seeds are changed, is invariably the most productive. Partiality apart, her improvement in the most estimable of subjects was amazingly rapid ;—partiality allowed, it appeared supernatural. So apt, so lovely a scholar, was never before, nor since, found. Many years are numbered from the period when the lover assumed

the name of the husband; and the truth of this statement is only acknowledged to be more evident.

As we advance in life, there may be less of admiration, but a higher value is set on character. There may be less ardour in affection, but more solidity of attachment. Standing corn seems more in bulk when unreaped, than when cut down and placed in sheaves. It occupies still less space when thrashed, but is more secure from injury, and better fitted for use.

Young friendships, like new wine, have the brighter colour, and the more luscious taste. Matured regards, as that which has acquired age, gain in strength and flavour what may be lost in appearance.

Notwithstanding my better judgment,

I was for speedily concluding the days of courtship. In ordinary circumstances, tedious delays are as unwise as they are unscriptural. The most unpropitious conjugal connection recorded in sacred history followed a protracted solicitation of seven years. My case was somewhat extraordinary. The felicities of this season were to yield to the acquisition of those stores which were to add to the happiness of after-life.

Superior wisdom, by unforeseen occurrences, effected that delay which I at the time regretted. I blush on recollecting that I felt "I did well to be angry." Stronger evidence of inaptitude, under the best tuition, cannot be adduced, than that the same lesson should be so frequently repeated.

The time drew near when I was to receive her *hand* at the altar, who had already given me her *heart*. As an excursion was to be taken for two months on our marriage, I made use of this arrangement as an argument for speedier union. To travel as the days decline in length, when the evenings are chilly, to throw our evenings away at incommodious inns, seemed then to be more than plausible reasons for haste.

The winter had been rigorous, beyond what is usual in our western county; and the spring was fine and open. Such weather, like external prosperity, is insidious. We enjoyed its warmth and brilliancy; the more so from previous privations.

One evening, when Mr. Duncombe



was visiting at his uncle's, he and my sister walked with Emma and myself to see the venerable ruins of a monastery which were not far distant from our abode.

As the setting sun threw his refulgent rays on the ivy which hung on the Gothic windows, we were induced, in admiring the scene, to protract our stay. To recover the time thus unwisely expended, we quickened our pace on our return. On crossing the Downs, the vapours of the evening rose from the humid earth. The following morning I found Emma had taken a violent cold. Her delicate frame yielded readily to the assault of disease. A fever ensued. At the same period an epidemic raged in the neighbouring village. Two persons had died of cold age in the month of March—that month

so fatal to persons of declining years. Report affirmed their malady to be the contagious fever. My apprehensions gave easy credit to this improbable tale. Harriet attempted to soothe me under my disqualifying fears. Kind as she was, and rich as my past experience was of interposing mercy, I despaired of her recovery. No tongue can express the solicitude with which I watched the progress of this cruel disorder.

The physician at length communicated to Mrs. Stephens *his* alarm. To Mr. Duncombe he pronounced the case hopeless. Never have I loved that amiable youth more than when he broke to me this fatal secret. Prepared as I was, or thought I had been, for the event, I became distracted.

Mrs. Stephens called me, at Emma's request, into her room, to receive her farewell. I concealed the powerful, the overwhelming sensations of my agitated breast. As I approached the bed on which her weakened and emaciated frame lay, she gently raised her head, and, in terms I had taught her, said, "Charles, my dearest friend! this is the unseen hand of Mercy."—The rebellion of my heart contradicted this assertion. I was silent. Had I spoken, my faltering accents would have betrayed the emotion of my mind.

Emma fell into a dose. I thought the Messenger of release had received her disembodied spirit. Harriet tenderly attempted to draw me towards the window. I could not refrain from seizing the pallid hand of the patient sufferer, which I pressed

to my lips, and bedewed with copious tears. To my ineffable surprise and joy, my dear Emma opened her eyes, and softly said, with the most refined tenderness of reproof, "The cup which *our* Father giveth us, shall we not drink it?" Her earthly parent was overwhelmed at this expression, and exclaimed, "It is the delirium of death." "No," interposed my sister, "it is the sweet transport of life." I confess I was little more than a spectator. Grief benumbed and infatuated me. As I was torn from her room, Harriet says I exclaimed, "I will die with her!"—"No," said Emma, louder than I supposed possible, "Live, my dear friend! but not unto yourself, but to Him who died for us."—Never did she look so lovely :—

"Our blessings brighten as they take the wing."

I begged to be alone. I fell on my

knees ; and there passed from my lips no voice of prayer, but the groanings which cannot be uttered. I believe I fainted, for it was dusk when I was aroused by a gentle rapping at the door. I heard Harriet, seeking admittance. In an ecstasy, she embraced me, and exclaimed, " My dearest brother ! prayer has been heard. The exhausted patient has had composing slumber, and is certainly revived. The hand of tender Compassion may yet raise her from a bed of sickness."

Harriet seemed as the strengthening Angel, sent to minister to her brother. Religious consolation is never so acceptable, as from affectionate piety, in a female form.—Physicians prescribe, but nurses administer the medicines.

The strong light of devotional truth

was so attèmpèred by the mild medium of my sister's language, that I could lift up my head and rejoice. O that what she then said had been recorded! She was unquestionably inspired,—inspired by His spirit who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

Emma gradually recovered. Throughout her entire indisposition, her religious principles not only burnt steadily, but sometimes blazed forth, to the admiration of all present. Her sentiments before were like the exquisitely delicate painting on some of the finest specimens of porcelain. The attrition of the world would have erased those beauteous lines. Can I regret the fire through which she passed, which fixed them—which rendered them permanent for life?

Till the following spring our union was delayed. Nor were we blessed with happiness,

“ Till we were taught, by previous pain,  
To bear it well,—till it was safe to smile.”

Steady as our views are on doctrines derived from that volume, the excellence of whose language is, that it gives a certain sound ; convinced as we are that the designs of Mercy are not to be thwarted by any power, earthly or infernal ; we yet conclude, to our own satisfaction, that but for these painful events our better impressions might have worn out—our better life expired. Often have we adored that power which gives life, and that wisdom which sustains, not by miracle, but by means of liberal, uninterrupted, and inexhaustible supplies.

On the same day, my sister became Mrs. Duncombe, and I received Emma as the best gift of indulgent Heaven.

I love, in the lengthening retrospect, to look back on our nuptial day. Its reflexive rays yet cheer me.

There was but one circumstance to embitter. Our elder relatives did not perceive at the festival, HIM, who, though invisible, graced his own institution with his presence. Had this been their privilege, we should have wanted nothing: our bliss would have been complete. Benevolent from instinct and habit, they wished us to follow our own plans.

Independent of our own relatives, we had only one guest on the occasion, a person who well sustained the character



given of those who are put into the ministry. His grave deportment ; his cheerful conversation ; his liberality of opinion, as to the permitted indulgences of this day of gladness ; and, above all, his rich and easy spirituality of expression ; made him a fit representative of HIM who was the visible guest at the marriage in Cana, and the unseen associate on many such occasions, until the present happy time.

## CHAP. VIII.

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For He of joys divine shall tell  
That wean from earthly woe,  
And triumph o'er the mighty spell  
That chains the heart below.

BEATTIE'S *Retirement*.

---

**M**y sister's marriage presented every prospect of as complete happiness as can fall to the lot of any couple : for, independently of all external sanctions,—such as, the approbation of parents, equality of rank, and suitability of years,—there existed such similarity of natural disposition, such congeniality of taste, and such harmonious accord of sentiment,

as to lead to the conclusion, that "this match was made in heaven." There could not occur disputes for authority; as both referred to that book, whose express testimony has settled that important question. Mr. Duncombe could never forget, that he owed all his happiness to the operation of those principles which he had obtained immediately from Heaven,—instrumentally, from his Harriet.

Much as he loved and admired her before their union, he told me in a letter, written after the birth of their third child, that his wife's varied excellencies had before been to him as the fairest blossoms—beautiful, fragrant, and gladdening: but now they appeared as the richest and most valuable fruit. His climax of commendation was that of sister, wife, mother. In his praise of her

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under the last character, I suspect there was somewhat of the father; for he was ardently attached to his little-ones.

My sister's heart, like a fair mirror, reflected her husband's excellencies to the life. She once had feared lest children should divide her affections, and diminish her attentions to her endeared lord. The intricate paradox in social feeling was soon solved by her own sensations. Her love was increased in intensity, by diffusion. Hallowed attachments are thus strengthened by division. That BEING, who is essential Love, has the most numerous objects of his regard; nor has any one reason to fear a diminished share by the multiplication of participants.

Mr. Duncombe resided near the metropolis. Commercial avocations re-



quired his daily attendance in town. His property was much involved with his uncle's, in the Western Archipelago. Adverse occurrences, as they were deemed, rendered it necessary for one of the partners in the house to take a voyage, and inspect the residentiary agents in the plantations. Who so suited for this undertaking as the junior in the firm?

Several letters from Harriet prepared us for this distressing resolution. At length the following epistle came to hand. My sister generally corresponded with me: this was addressed to my loveliest Emma. The original lies before me.

“ MY DEAREST SISTER,

“ As in you I have always found the amiable counterpart of my dear brother, and have invariably observed that

you can add to his pleasures or diminish his griefs, I persuade myself that the distressing intelligence I now communicate will be less afflictive from your hand. You were, by my last letter, led to indulge the hope, that the affair in Antigua might be settled without my best-beloved William's taking the voyage. That fond hope is now destroyed, and he has actually sailed before this time : he left me for Portsmouth on Saturday. On the day preceding there was a consultation held at Hanover Square ; when this resolution, so fatal to my happiness, was taken. When he returned from his uncle's, embracing me with more than common ardour, he said, ' My Harriet, ~~HE~~ who first brought us together, will bring me home in safety. We have received good at the hand of the Lord : why should we anticipate evil ?'—Before he

left me yesterday, he read with me several passages of Scripture, and commended me and our lovely trio to our fathers' God. In closing his prayer, he sweetly introduced those words which are my hourly support: 'Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.' His allusion was to the mystery of this dispensation. My fears carried me to their literal import.

"To-day I have been mercifully sustained by an attendance on the holy services of the temple. You know our privilege in having Mr. B. for our shepherd. I suspected that he must have known the state of my mind, but I have found he did not. He read for his text, in his emphatic and tender manner, those words, Ps. lxxviii. 78. 'So he fed them according to the inte-

grity of his heart ; and guided him by the skilfulness of his hands.' Every word he spoke fell on my bosom as the oil of consolation. After enlarging on the character of David as the type of his greater and better son, and descanting beautifully on the integrity of his heart, which he considered as importing the entire and indissoluble affection he bore his people, in his own peculiarly happy way, after having read, ' He guides them by the skilfulness of his hands,' he suddenly and as in joyful ecstasy exclaimed, ' What hands are those I behold stretched out for my guidance and support ! hands torn and impressed with crucifixion nails ! —then I am passive—I am contented—I am grateful. O Jesus ! though thou slayest me, yet will I trust in thee.'—Then turning to his auditory, and laying his finger on the text, he added, ' Yes, my dear hearers,

He here shews us his hands and his side.  
 Let us be glad, now we see the Lord.  
 —Indeed, my beloved Emma, I heard  
 little more during the entire discourse.  
 I saw Him who had guided my parents  
 by his counsel, and has received them to  
 glory; and thought I could say, ‘I have  
 none on earth I desire besides Him.’  
 But, oh the treachery of my heart!  
 As the solemnly-expressive tones of the  
 organ swelled in tender and pathetic  
 sounds to that verse which closed the  
 service,—

‘The dearest idol I have known,  
 Whate’er that idol be,  
 Help me to tear it from Thy throne,  
 And worship none but Thee!’—

my whole heart reverted to the endeared  
 mariner. Oh, Emma!—forgive the over-  
 flowings of conjugal anxiety!—I thought,

now perhaps the surrender is accepted—  
my husband sinks in the mighty waters.  
He has taken the dedicated thing.

“This evening I conversed with, and  
commended my dear children to their  
father’s God; and have now seen them  
safe, and warmly laid. I relieve my mind  
by thus revealing to you my feelings.  
I need not request an interest in your  
prayers, and those of my brother. Give  
my love to your dear little-ones; and be  
assured of the continued affection of

“Your afflicted

“Sunday  
Evening.

“H. DUNCOMBE.”

After Emma had concluded the letter, for  
a short season I was lost in anxious astonish-  
ment. As our custom was, we jointly re-  
ferred this new occasion of complicated

sympathy to Him who is touched with the feeling of our sorrows. Our minds being at length composed, after much deliberation we resolved writing to our distressed sister: and then informing her that we would shortly journey to London, from whence we hoped she would consent to return with us, I added a Postscript, stating, that perhaps Mr. D. might, on his return, make Falmouth or Plymouth; and thus she might, being in the West, have the earliest opportunity of an interview.

The following morning we left home. There are two roads from our village to the inn which would be our first stage, and to us it was a matter of entire indifference which course was to be taken. So accustomed were we to consider nothing as totally trivial, that, as we

entered the carriage, Emma having said "The higher road will be most pleasant, drive on that,"—I inquired, as soon as we were seated, if she had any peculiar reason for the preference ; for I was the more curious, as I ever deemed it the least agreeable tract, and as she rarely issued injunctions without consulting me.—"It was by mere accident that I spoke," replied my beloved companion ; "for my whole heart was fixed on the dear lambs we have left at home." The conversation turned on our parental regrets at parting with our children, though but for a season, and on a mission of mercy.

Realizing the prospect of our longer separation, and the happy re-union which shall occur in the state of uninterrupted felicity, the distance appeared unusually short : and although it seemed as if



we had but just left home, we already found ourselves at the foot of the hill on which stands the tenth mile-stone, and where a turnpike-gate is placed. How sweetly do such conversations beguile the tedium of a journey ! Such themes, and with the same blessed associate, have frequently been my song during the time of my pilgrimage. At the toll-house I observed two horses, with saddles, standing fastened to the pales which protect a small piece of waste ground, cultivated as a garden by the industrious man who keeps the gate. Knowing my equipage, he ran down the hill to meet us ; and, with a countenance indicating much alarm, informed us that a gentleman, travelling with his servant, had been seized with a fit, and was dying—if not, indeed, already dead. I hastened forward, and found a genteel and elderly person ex-

tended on their humble couch ; and his servant, a respectable man, who had long lived with him, lamenting the loss of the best of masters. It occurred to me instantaneously that there was a cause, though unknown to us, why we had taken this road. ONE who travelled with designs of compassion, and whose opinion claims the highest reverence, led by like guidance, *must needs* go through a town which did not lie immediately in his road. Every assistance we could afford was cheerfully given. The trusty domestic rode, or rather flew, as I directed him, for Mr. Johnson.—Medical skill was successfully exerted.

On our return from London, we found the stranger, who had been removed to the nearest town, considerably recovered. He did not leave our neighbourhood for

some weeks afterwards. In him I have found one of my most valuable friends. Accustomed to trace the operations of unerring wisdom in every event, I have heard him say, that his latter years have been rendered abundantly happier by this occurrence. Our slight acquaintance has ripened into an intimate and affectionate friendship. His valuable servant has chosen to reside in our village, having made choice of our nursery-maid for his wife. They are truly happy; and have every day reason to bless Him who does every thing according to the counsel of his own will, and who leadeth man by a way which he knows not, and setteth the solitary in families.

In anticipating the social bliss of the future state, I invariably associate with my happier feelings the sweet counsel

counsel I have taken with this excellent clergyman. His presence cheered me when I lost my first-born. He was our inmate when the world lost all its charms for me;—he soothed my rebellious heart when my dearest Emma ascended to the abodes of bliss. When I wept over his tomb, I seemed a solitary being: and but for the union between his son and my beloved Emma, my youngest daughter, I should now be almost without a prop in my declining days. On these I repose; and daily present my praises to HIM, who has thus mercifully prevented me in the days of my calamity. I may reverse the pathetic lamentation of the Patriarch; and gratefully acknowledge, that I am not bereaved of all my children, nor are my grey hairs brought down with sorrow to the grave.

## CHAP. IX.

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Clouds do not always veil the skies,  
 Nor showers immerse the verdant plain ;  
 Nor do the billows always rise,  
 Nor storms afflict the ruffled main.

JOHNSON.

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ON reaching London, we found our invaluable sister rejoicing in tribulation. I knew her too well, to suppose she would faint in the day of adversity. She agreed to accompany us home. Her children attended her, and added much to her happiness, and to the playful satisfactions of their country cousins.

It happened soon after her arrival at

our tranquil dwelling, which I begged might be her asylum till Mr. Duncombe's return, that our conversation took its accustomed turn. Each of us, from the stock of individual experience, added some interesting illustration of our favourite topic. Our new friend entered with warmth into our discussion. He was accidentally that morning of the party, having come to take his leave, being able to return to his family. His sacred order gave him the authority to propose, on separation, acts of social devotion. Our corrected judgment, and the temper of our minds, rendered the proposition peculiarly acceptable. At that time we entertained no thought of knowing him more intimately. As we rose from our knees, there was not one of the small group but *wished* for that friendship which was granted in after-

years. Whether it was that the affectionate reference he made to the endeared voyager, or the benevolence with which he spoke of his juvenile fellow-worshippers, as he commended them to the grace of HIM who took little-ones up in his arms and blessed them; or whether there is something so powerfully attractive in visible piety, in embodied religion; I do not know: but no sooner had he resumed his seat, and raised his handkerchief to his face, than the children approached him with filial freedom and reverence, and begged to sit on his knee. Had I not known it before, I had now discovered that *he* was a parent.

As he mounted his horse to quit us, I said to Emma, "Our lot is like that of the Patriarch,—we have entertained an angel unawares." Subsequent events

have confirmed this sentiment. To us he has proved the ministering angel. In many instances he has been a messenger of mercy. His disembodied spirit is now with the innumerable company of angels!

The voyage of my brother was remarkably prosperous. He fully accomplished the object of his mission; and landed, as we had wished, at a Western port. Harriet could not be persuaded to pass all the interval of his absence with us; but it was so ordered, by an unperceived interference, that she should be favouring us with a second visit when her partner was restored to her.

The perils of the mighty ocean, which he had encountered, endeared him to every one of us. A finer subject for a picture cannot be conceived, than the



first interview of this united pair and their beloved children. If the delineation could be exact and accurate, it would be a glimpse of the celestial world—of that morning, when those who have been severed by the grave shall gloriously rise, and, with their Lord, meet each other in the clouds.

So much trouble had been entailed by the colonial property, that Mr. Duncombe, with Harriet's advice, resolved on its alienation. His recent visit enabled him to effect a sale on terms peculiarly advantageous, and with far less difficulty than had he depended for local information on the reports of others, perhaps purchased agents. He more readily renounced the profitable pursuits of commerce, as his father about this time died, after a lingering indisposition. This loss,

while it damped his attachment to the present state, rendered it far easier and more justifiable to quit a lucrative concern.

The same year, the benevolent parent of my dearest Emma was taken from us. There was *hope* in his death. My wife wished for *certainty* on the subject. Hope implies the alternation of fear.— More genuine benevolence is not found in any individual, than shone radiantly in his conduct. I have often regretted, that persons deemed his betters do not more resemble him.

Harriet and her excellent husband were chiefly gratified by these acquisitions of property, as it enabled them to dispense more liberally to the needy. Their charity was not, however, profusion : it was

discriminate and judicious bestowment. I used to rally these united philanthropists on a peculiarity in their conduct, which was, if an error, an error on the right side. They would on no occasion permit their names to appear in *printed* statements, too often the vehicle of ostentatious communication. As they sustained no *public* character; as they had retired into the country, to Mr. Duncombe's paternal mansion; as they were habituated to do good by stealth; as they knew well their own hearts, prone to be injured by commendation; they thus acted. I do not record their conduct in this respect for imitation. I will not vindicate their pertinacious adherence to this practice. But, so far as *purity of motive* is concerned, it may be safe to say to every one who gives, "Go thou, and do likewise."

Our visits were regularly interchanged; and many months of mercy rapidly passed over our heads. I believe we rarely met, but we took a review of all the way in which we had severally been led, during our earthly sojourn. Bright prospects were granted us into an unexplored country, where lies our better inheritance.

Our children grew in stature, and, in the parental eye, daily more amiable. My brother-in-law and myself have frequently, with enthusiasm and tears, recounted the parental excellencies of *his* Harriet and *my* Emma. In these moments, when we realized the time when the fathers should not be, we saw, in fair perspective, there would be the children to rise up and call them blessed.

( Of these fugitive days, during which

we had what we termed afflictive dispensations, no one fled but was marked with favour from the liberal hand of Covenanted mercy. Our afflictions appeared light, and were momentary, as we essayed to look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen;—for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

The relict of Mr. Stephens still dwelt at the manor-house. Singular as it may appear, her happiness did not commence until most of her external comforts had been removed. She became infected with what some have termed 'our family superstition.' To command an extensive prospect, nearer objects, which obstruct, must be taken away. The settlement of all her family, but one; the loss of her

amiable husband ; and a paralytic stroke, which rendered recovery hopeless ; were the occasion of adopting those words,—which she well comprehended in their truest import,—“ I am left alone ; yet am I not alone, for the Invisible is with me.”

Her views of futurity were placidly comfortable. It was the serene light of a summer's evening, which irradiated her mind. In the park, not far from the house, the parish church had been reared by the inhabitant who was first lord of the manor. A thick plantation of shrubs, impervious to the eye, obscured this venerable building from view. She ordered her wood-ward to cut a vista through the trees, that the temple of worship might be easily seen from her window. The prospect cheered her. There was a time

when such a sight would not have been agreeable.

Our venerable friend, the clergyman, when he was a guest at the manor-house, enjoyed the spectacle. He would say, the sight of the pointed spire of a consecrated building refreshed his piety, and quickened his aspirations after that heaven to which it is the gate. Its language to him was *sursùm corde*! Thither did he come as a palmer of old visited Palestine.

I can only commiserate those who have no congenial sensations. To such I would recommend the following extract.

“Pilgrimage,” said Imlac, “like many other acts of piety, may be reasonable or superstitious, according to the principles on which it is performed. Long journeys

in search of truth are not commanded. Truth, such as is necessary to the regulation of life, is always found where it is honestly sought. Change of place is no natural cause of the increase of piety, for it inevitably produces dissipation of mind. Yet, since men go every day to view the fields where great actions have been performed, and return with stronger impressions of the event, curiosity of the same kind may naturally dispose us to view that country whence our religion had its beginning; and I believe no man surveys those awful scenes without some confirmation of holy resolutions. That the Supreme Being may more easily be propitiated in one place than another, is the dream of idle superstition; but that some places may operate upon our own minds in an uncommon manner, is an opinion which hourly experience will



justify. He who supposes that his vices may be more successfully combated in Palestine, will perhaps find himself mistaken; yet he may go thither without folly. He who thinks they will be more freely pardoned, dishonours at once his reason and religion."

## CHAP. X.

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Dark are thy ways of providence,  
 While those that love thee groan ;  
 Thy reasons lie conceal'd from sense,  
 Mysterious, and unknown !

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WATTS.

**M**r respected mother-in-law, though deeply afflicted, was not without external resources of relief, and possessed more amply internal consolations.

Her son, who resided at a distance, wrote to her with great frequency, and visited her with much regularity. But a son, however kind, dutiful, or affectionate, cannot assuage the severe suf-

ferings which are the daily attendants on an enfeebled and decaying body. Besides, amiable and excellent as *he* truly was, he imputed the satisfactions his mother did possess to imbecility of mind. He had known her best in the season of gaiety and pleasure : then she was always cheerful. When he saw her now, she appeared dejected and unhappy. To convince him of his erroneous views, was impossible. The terms she used to denote her 'supports,' he did not understand.

As he sat by her chair, to which she was a perpetual prisoner for twelve long years, and observed the silent tear roll down her cheek, he would tenderly salute her, and express his pity at her grief. Most frequently it was the tear of gratitude for her own lively hopes ; often, perhaps, of entreaty for her only son, the

image of his father, uniting with the like graces of person the same universal benevolence. The world was enriched by *their* virtues. Had these but occupied the right place in their hopes, and sprung from the right motive of action, the Church had been benefited by their conduct.

My dear Emma was a daily visitor at the manor-house, during these months of protracted suffering; except, which was often the case, when her rising family, her children's minds, and her husband's connections, forbade the exercise of her filial duty. She acted invariably from Scriptural principles. She had left father and mother to become her husband's. Every duty was conscientiously allowed its proper place,—had given to it, its due importance.

But there remained to Mrs. Stephens her youngest daughter, Emily, who had not yet fled from the parental nest. Some time before this period, this most valuable member of the family, whose personal charms were certainly equal to any of her female kindred, had greatly interested the eldest son of a gentleman who resided in our county. For this alliance Emily's mother was very anxious; and was, I fear, unduly harsh, in consequence of what she then termed her daughter's scruples and precision.

The youth had just left College, where he had imbibed principles in direct opposition to those which are there inculcated. His attainments in science were not contemptible; his manners agreeable; his fortune large, and his prospects elevated and flattering. With all these

advantages, he rejected the revelations of mercy and wisdom. Like the polished and lettered sages of antiquity, he esteemed that foolishness which is essential wisdom. Emily declined encouraging his hopes. Her father, then living, affectionately urged her to accept him, but would on no account permit her inclinations to be forced. Relying on his paternal tenderness, she bore the better her mother's incessant importunity on the subject.

I have sometimes imagined her affections were already his ; but her heart was garrisoned by reason and religion. New attentions from other suitors were declined. I have since seen, in these preventive arrangements, that He who is excellent in design, and wonderful in operation, was thus reserving for the day

of approaching calamity this amiable girl, as the companion of her afflicted mother, and to evince the superiority of those very sentiments which had before obtained so illustrious a triumph. Emily considered that her path had been marked out by unerring direction. In her present dutiful attendance and cheerful privations she pleased not herself, in that sense only in which those words are applicable to her best model. She found her pleasure, like Him, in acts of self-denial and benevolence.

The entrance of moral evil into the world, or the most abstruse dogma that ever excruciated the faculties of polemics, never perturbed the mind more than did the dispensations of providence to this family. Before Mrs. Stephens had fully pardoned Emily's obstinacy, the palsy

struck her. Occasional absence from home might have mitigated maternal displeasure. Much did I pity my sister. Her mother supposed that now she would gratify herself by a petty revenge,—the worst weakness of a little mind. She wished Emma had remained single, as her attentions would have been the result of uninjured affection. Little did she know that the same happy fruits were to be gathered from the like principles in Emily's bosom. She at length felt towards this daughter the double attachment of mother and child; for to her she owed spiritual existence, and her better hopes. But for the tender and humble instructions of Emily, Mrs. Stephens would have been miserable:—now she was happy. It is true her daughter was assisted by others: our friend the clergyman was frequently with her.



Other members of her family threw in their mite of endeavour. But the chief success which followed Emily's efforts was in exclusive consequence of an invisible Interpreter, one among a thousand, whose agency is never sought in vain.

As those years of suffering and debility tardily rolled round, and as I never found my eminent sister once slackening in her filial attentions, I have been continually struck with the efficiency of principles which have stood the test of experience in every changing vicissitude. I have turned aside to see this great sight, wondrous as the burning—but unconsumed—thicket seen by Moses in Midian. With reverence have I contemplated the spectacle of this suffering mother and sympathising daughter,—hap-

pier far than in seasons of uninterrupted prosperity. I have both heard a voice and seen an appearance which justifies the assertion.—God was there. The bleakest mountain, or the gloomiest valley, are pleasant, if He is present.

Whether credited or not, I can affirm that the sweet delights of my own fire-side, and all the many indulgences of social life, have lost their fair brilliancy in the superior splendor of this scene. The decease accomplished at Jerusalem by HIM who did nothing amiss, has so gladdened the sick room of this transformed sufferer, that I have reluctantly left it:—I have said, “It is good to be here.” The delights of that season when I first visited the manor-house are lost in these sublimer satisfactions. It composes my mind at this moment, to recall

those blissful afternoons when my beloved Emma, her dear sister, and myself, formed the little party round the sofa of our patient mother. Emily, as the resident priestess of this consecrated spot, kept the fire of devotion burning with the zeal and purity of the Vestal virgins. The decrepid parent looked more cheerful than I had ever seen her, and would have served a sculptor for a model of suffering patience. Emma was always foremost in works of labour and love. Had but Harriet and her husband been present, the association would have been complete. To the flying minutes on such occasions I have often said, Entreat me not to leave this society : where these are, there will I be : this people shall be my people ; their God, my God : and when they die, I will die ; and where they are buried, I will be buried.

Indeed, such is the impression these blissful interviews have produced in my mind, that to this day, when I observe exterior marks of gaiety and gladness, I fear there is heaviness in that mirth: and on the contrary, where I enter a house of affliction, I am cheered by a secret hope, that He who was often at Bethany, and loved to resort thither, may be again present.

Let this be imputed to the weakness of advancing years. It is still a staff which supports me. I will lean on it from very age. Nor is it any small subject of praise; that such hopes revive, when every other fails.

I always felt a conviction, that my sister's filial piety would be largely recompensed: sometimes I concluded in

this world : again, I postponed my certainty till the resurrection of the just.

Believing the efficacy of prayer, I was sure Emily was rich beyond any of her family. Her case was never forgotten by those of us who had opportunities of speaking to the KING invisible : his commandment, with promise, seemed to pledge his extraordinary interposition. And confidently did I build my hopes on the dying benediction of her tender and admiring mother. Her expiring breath was prayer for Emily. The last tear wiped away from her face by the hand of divine Love, was one which was silently falling on Emily.

“ And if there is a tear so meek,  
As would not stain an angel's cheek ;  
’Tis that this pious mother shed  
Upon her duteous daughter's head.”

## CHAP. XI.

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They that honour Me, I will honour.

I SAMUEL.

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MRS. STEPHENS; by her testamentary arrangements, had, to the full satisfaction of every branch of the family, largely distinguished Emily. And now broke upon her that day of reward and felicity which was anticipated for her by all but herself. A year had scarcely elapsed, when, after repeated solicitation, our clerical friend consented to bring down some members of his family, with whom before we had been but imperfectly

acquainted. His daughters, on their return from our abode, were to be accompanied by their brother; as their parent was not willing so frequently to leave his parochial flock. This youth (since, my valued son, the companion and friend of my daughter Emma) took his course hither, through Oxford, to enjoy the society of one, formerly a school-fellow, though much his senior. It being the time of recess from collegiate residence, he found his friend preparing for an excursion into the southern part of the Welch principality. A small deviation from his route brought him to our village. The circumstances of introduction secured him a cordially welcome reception. His prospects in the church were good: already he had, for one so young, valuable preferment. By gradual progression, he is at this period enjoying

the dignity, and fulfilling the important functions of a Dean. His friends fully depend on his wearing lawn sleeves. His genuine modesty, the accompaniment of worth so eminent as his, will urge him *sincerely* to say—and what is sometimes a *mere* formulary—“*Nolo episcopari.*”

This person is the blessing prepared by God for the much-enduring Emily. The season of preliminary acquaintance was not unnecessarily protracted. Emma lived to see them thus happy. If the black passion of envy could be justified, or if it could be indulged without injuring its objects, such felicity as theirs would offer the strongest temptation. It has sometimes occurred to me, that their united histories would be the most luminous illustration of that unfailing promise made to those who exemplify the



duties enjoined by the fifth precept in the decalogue. The light of heaven shines on their tabernacle. They have had as much prosperity as could safely be allotted them; and the few afflictions they have met with seem to have been deprived of their noxious character. They are blessed, and none can reverse it. Four children have been granted to this devoted pair. Those who are susceptible of instruction, already evince what a combination of parental effort can produce. At their present tender age, their amiable tempers, their ready self-denial, their regularity of behaviour, and their cheerful reception of learning, together with their innocent sportive dispositions, prove how greatly they have profited under their various advantages. A kindly soil offers but few impediments to this rich cultivation. A judicious system of means

is dependently adhered to. Both parents co-operate with equal zeal and affection: and the presumption is already justifiable, that these children will, unquestionably, continue and flourish in every thing lovely and of good report.

The Dean entered so fully into our maxims on the subject of an Invisible agent ruling and directing his people, that it was among the very first instructions his little-ones received from his lips.

In character, as in personal feature, there may be general resemblance, although each have his specific distinction. I was amused the other evening, as I sat with this amiable pair, surrounded by their pleasant family groupe, with a coincidence which I traced, or fancied I observed, in my own education and

theirs. The history of the Babylonish monarch, alarmed by the hand-writing on the wall, was the tale for that evening. The judicious and pious remarks of the Dean, enlivened by the cheerful illustrations of his equal Emily, were delivered in so simple, and yet so dignified a manner, that the dear children were at once entertained, and their intellectual faculties raised and expanded. In this method of instruction I saw evidently the purpose of Him, who, in providence as in revelation, has tenderly said, "It is not my will that any of these little-ones should perish."

Emily has, for the present, resting on her the chief charge of the children; especially as, when a Chapter is held, the attendance of its President is demanded. He holds no sinecure.

The great success which had followed the plan pursued by my Emma, and Mrs. Duncombe, induced their sister to imitate their example.

Much solicitude was evinced in the selection of a proper person to undertake the important work of tuition. A letter addressed by Emily to the young lady who resides with them in this capacity was shewn me the other day by the Dean, who had taken a copy of it. I sometimes suspect he had improved it; as a work of so much merit would not discredit their united wisdom. I regret that I have not the letter by me. As far as I can recollect, it was an epitome of the plan adopted by her elder sisters, and sanctioned by the Supreme benediction. Matters of detail were reserved for the personal commencement of her

labours. *Religious* sentiments were, in the first place, largely and luminously stated, and placed in their chief and primary station. Two tables of stone were given by God to his prophet. The duties of the first fulfilled, will render those of the second easy in discharge. Mental cultivation was then enlarged on ; and a wise distinction maintained between the mere impartation of knowledge, and the acquirement of true practical wisdom, which teaches its proper use. What are termed accomplishments were treated of in their order. As to these, much assistance would be obtained from the several visiting instructors. From the way in which they were spoken of, it was evident the subject had been considered in reference to both worlds. To excel in such attainments was not her chief desire. Like Themis-

toes; who could teach a small state how to grow great, she disdained to labour in trifles, and considered petty accomplishments as below her ambition.

She introduced into this letter—which was, however, but preliminary to a fuller developement of her views and expectations on the subject of education—a brief sketch of the *manners* she was anxious for them to acquire. These manners she wished to result from a prompt perception and an attentive consideration of the duties they owed to all, in the different relations—superior, inferior, or equal. To combine dignity of deportment with the familiarity of benevolence; to associate the charms of respectful submission to their superiors, acceptable freedom with their equals, and a winning condescension to their inferiors; was her

great aim. Nothing was to be considered as trivial. Every thing that was to be learnt, was to be learnt well;—all principles to be reduced immediately to practice. The lesson of the day was to be exemplified by its consequential duty. Emily principally instilled into the mind of the preceptress, that no success could follow the best-directed or most indefatigable exertions, without the implored benediction of Heaven. A consciousness of inability had, I suppose, been expressed in some former communication from Miss T. The true and evident, but disregarded distinction between genuine humility—which, in dependence on the Divine aid, will attempt the fulfilment of every duty—was happily pointed out and placed in forcible contrast to the counterfeit of that grace which is

often the concealment of pride, or the shelter of indolence.

The differences in intellectual endowments and literary acquirements are as obvious as the varieties of stature and of shape. To deny the possession of them, if granted, is surely ingratitude, rather than humility. He who exemplified this grace in its loveliest and most appropriate forms, thanked God that he could speak with more tongues than others, and that he had profited in learning above many of his equals, in rank, and years, and advantages. Nor would he have deemed it Christian humility, to have declared himself unfit for his Apostolic duties. He felt and bewailed imperfect sanctification; and confessed that he was less than the least of all saints. He



distrusted himself :—he magnified his office. In correct views of his duty, and in diligent attempts to discharge his obligation, he was not a whit behind the very chief of his fellow-labourers.

I entertain no doubt but the promised guidance was bestowed in introducing Miss T. into ~~their~~ family. Her conscientious estimate of the great responsibility of the charge, her anxiety to impart benefit, and a deep persuasion that the peace, honour, and eternal welfare of the children, have, in some measure, been confided to her, were apparent in a conversation I held with her, the last time I was guest at the deanery. The circumstances of her introduction were what many would have deemed singular and accidental. This

I viewed as an auspicious presage. Never did Roman augur more anxiously inspect the entrails of the consecrated bird, or Grecian priest mark the flight of the ærial omen, than I have watched and waited for the movements of the pillar and the cloud. Emily has daily reason to say, that she was favoured with that direction which said, "This is the way: walk ye in it."

That the warranted hopes of these parents will be realized, I have had for years the most satisfactory persuasion;—a persuasion *founded* on the previous attentions rendered by Emily to her afflicted mother. There is a retributive connection in divine providences. Obedient children have themselves dutiful posterity. This persuasion was *confirmed*, when the tender infants were presented,

in their order, at the hallowed font. The ear of faith perceived it was no delusion, as those words fell from the lips of incarnate Love: "Suffer little children to be brought unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And, finally, this conviction is daily *deepened*; as I observe, that the dispensation of means they are placed under, solicits the Divine interference.

I am not able to disjoin the gracious promise of Heaven, which, in the gift of seed-time presents an assurance of harvest: and adds, for our encouragement, "He that soweth liberally, shall have abundant increase."

## CHAP. XII.

Practical principles appear to grow stronger, absolutely in themselves, by exercise ; as well as relatively with regard to contrary principles ; which, by being accustomed to submit, do so habitually, and of course. And thus a new character, in several respects, may be formed ; and many habitudes of life, not given by nature, but which religion directs us to acquire.

BUTLER'S *Ana.*—*Chap. on Moral Discipline.*

THE Hermit of Teneriffe was, by its truly great author, deemed the best of his works. It is a pleasing and powerful exemplification of the force of habit. Much are those moralists to be censured who would despoil that goodness of the praise of volition which is the result of well-regulated customs. Such habits are,

in the fullest sense, voluntary. Who would deny purpose and skill to an architect, merely because his labours are rendered easy by repetition ?

Later ages have been overwhelmed with the folly of innovation. Whatever is orderly, is considered as corrupt. Age, and all that is venerable, was a prescriptive title to reproach, insult, and death, in a neighbouring country. The pestilential vapours of that stagnant marsh of moral national depravity infected some in this island. The epidemic spread. Our entire family compact was pledged to the counteraction of those accursed principles, which owe their chief success to their being kindred to every evil propensity natural to the human heart. The hope was cherished by every head of our houses, that our domestic circle

would offer a moral leaven, that should silently operate in extensive diffusion. It affords us considerable comfort to observe, that these consequences have already taken place.

In those households which are enlarging in numbers,—while mine is, alas! rapidly diminishing,—the same sentiments of regularity and subordination prevail; the same efforts to extend moral light to all around are made; and the like distinct recognition of the hand of Love and Mercy is to be perceived.

Legal instruments, executed by integrity and skill, will secure the entail of perishable possessions. These, unaccompanied by correct sentiments, are not enjoyed by the possessor, and prove no blessing to society. They often place

power (for wealth and ancestry are power) where it is rendered despicable, and give ability to be pernicious to others. The perpetuation of good principles will ensure the continuation of our family honours. To such principles are owing, remotely, the wealth transmitted to them. Should it, by diffusion, be materially lessened, the operation of the like sentiments have the promise of renewed acquisition.

But these fond hopes were not cherished exclusively for those who were called by our names. The grand purposes of progressive mercy are, by the hand of Invisible agency, daily accomplishing. The opposing principles of right and wrong are not fighting uncertainly :—these wax stronger and stronger. Those are daily becoming weaker : and

the value of victory is to be ascertained by considering not only what the conquerors may have gained, but also what the conquered have lost. This is most true in moral or religious questions:—this is most true where the victory has been silently achieved. Like the operations of nature, progress is effected without clamor. Triumphs on these grounds are not tumultuous; nor likely to be followed by subsequent defeats. The territory once gained, is kept. The prize obtained, is unfading and imperishable.

“Real religion resembles majestic rivers, which are poured from an abundant and unfailing source. Silent and peaceful in their outset, they begin by dispensing beauty and comfort to every cottage by which they pass. In their further progress, they fertilize provinces,



and enrich kingdoms. At length, they pour themselves into the ocean; where, changing their names, but not their natures, they visit distant nations and other hemispheres, and spread throughout the world the expansive tide of their benevolence."

Before those days had arrived in which I say "I have no pleasure\*,"—for I am solitary,—I laboured to form for myself, and impart to others, right habits. Habit is as applicable to thought as to action,—to mind as well as body. They are most easily formed in youth—the plastic age; but are most powerfully pernicious, or useful, in our approach to a second childhood. After passing the grand climacteric of life, to subdue a habit is as useless an attempt as to bend a majestic oak,


\* Ecclesiastes xii. 1, &c.

the monarch of the forest. Its inutility arises from its being impracticable.

Many, in the evening of their days, most regret those evils which, like fetters, render their walk into the valley irksome and tedious. Unable to sustain their own weight, how distressed are they by an additional incumbrance.

To my aged compeers, I would most recommend the strengthening of their better customs. To attempt the eradication of old, or the implantation of new, is alike absurd.


My clerical friend used to labour this point with all his connections. His own example illustrated his exhortations. "William," said he to his son, one day in my hearing, as we contemplated that



stupendous work of art, the iron rail-way at Colebrook-dale, "mark the force of habit: it is in morals, what power is in mechanics. A good habit is the rail-way of virtue. Weights which would impede are thus borne without difficulty. Nay, as in the case of the inclined plane, the pressure is rendered the occasion of more rapid progress." From what was lovely and of good report in society, he proceeded in his observations to matters of devotion and piety. He told us, that that Spirit, which, free as the wind, bloweth where it listeth, condescended to sanction that which is stated and regular in religion.

As life is made up of little things, so is character. My dear friend's singularity on this subject may be known, by what may be termed a trivial circumstance.

HE appointed me his executor ; which office of friendship, as there were no lengthened trusts or complicated interests, I did not decline. In searching his papers, I found one which recorded, in ardent terms, his delightful sensations on re-entering his favourite apartment, and observing the darkened colour on the wall. This seemed to me extraordinary : but on turning round, I could easily perceive that his intense breathings in secret prayer had, in the course of time, somewhat tinged the paper of the room. I caught the impulse. I felt I was on holy ground. The very spot seemed privileged. Nor could I but gratefully acknowledge this accidental help to feelings too disposed to subside. The gentle gale revived the dying embers. The smoking flax is often thus fanned into a flame. Every little discovery proved to me, that he was daily



expecting that event which invested me with my mournful office.

So fully regular was he in all things, that I may say, but for the abuse of the term, he was his own executor. Every thing was prepared to my hand. I had only to renew that impulse which death prevented his continuing ; and all things again moved in harmonious order. I thought it not a little curious, that, owing to some slight innovations attempted at a vestry meeting a few weeks before his decease, he had absolutely sketched out a discourse on those words which ascribe " Order " to the supreme Deity, as one of his attributes.

In a course of domestic exposition, which for a long series of years he had pursued, and in which he now and then

permitted his neighbours to join, he had, the Sabbath before his translation—for it cannot be said he died—reached the 18th Chapter of St. John's Gospel. I happened to be present; nor shall ever forget his pertinent observations on the second verse, which, speaking of Gethsemane, observes, "And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the *place*; for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his Disciples."

His ruling passion—for such was his love of regularity—was even strong in death. He expired as he sat in his chair, just after he had risen, about noon; for he had been ill but a few days. I had entered his chamber to offer him my arm, as he was somewhat enfeebled; and was astonished to see him arranging, with great care, the bed-clothes. I exclaimed, "Do not con-

time here! that little fatigue should be avoided: you are, my dear sir, too precise." He mildly replied, "I was reflecting on that couch which He reposed in, for three days, after the labours and sufferings of his life; and considering, that when Peter entered the sepulchre, he saw the linen clothes lie *in order*; and the napkin that was round about his head not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

I smiled at his interpolation, but saw it was in the spirit of the text. I admired that state of mind which was indeed so enviable: and in the evening, as his corpse was extended on that bed, I thought of the sepulchre his morning reflections had resorted to; and looking placidly on that couch, could hardly forbear exclaiming, Come, see where the LORD lay!—His

punctuality differed from that of the world at large, inasmuch as it was the result of principle. Most sentiments, it is feared, embraced by the profane, are the result of their practices.

I found four little packets, each containing a Bible, directed for his grand-children. On their envelope he has written the following extract from a book he often read.

“Behold here the seminal principle which contains within it, as in an embryo state, the rudiments of all true virtue; which, striking deep its roots, though feeble, perhaps, and lowly in its beginning, yet silently progressive, and almost insensibly maturing, will shortly, even in the bleak and churlish temperature of this world, lift up its head, and spread abroad its branches, bearing abundant



fruits—precious fruits of refreshment and consolation; of which the boasted products of philosophy are but sickly imitations, void of fragrance and of flavour. At length, it shall be transplanted into its native region, and enjoy a more genial climate, and a kindlier soil; and bursting forth into full luxuriance, with unfading beauty and inexhausted odours, shall flourish for ever in the Paradise of God\*.”

I only add, that when I appeared before the Surrogate, in our remote county, to prove his testament, surprise was expressed at the perfection of arrangement which every word evinced. He said, “Such wills would prevent litigation.” A more pleasing prospect could not have opened on my friend. He was a lover of peace.

\* Wilberforce's “Practical View.”

### CHAP. XIII.

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Happy the man, who sees a God employ'd  
 In all the good and ill that chequer life ;  
 Resolving all events, with their effects  
 And manifold results, into the will  
 And arbitration wise of the Supreme !

COWPER.

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**I**T is universally admitted, that happiness is that which all are in pursuit of ;—and how rarely is the object sought for attained ! The genuine causes of these failures are to be discovered in our own tempers and neglects ;—tempers daily indulged ;—negligence, which at length becomes habitual.

That there is a wise, holy, and gracious

government exercised by the Great and Invisible Supreme over all his creatures, and over all their actions, is evident from the analogy of natural and traditional religion. That this rule is delegated to Him who accomplished the salvation of an apostate world, is expressly confirmed, by every species of proof admissible on such a subject.

Man's misery arises from the same source as his condemnation. Light has entered the world; but darkness is preferred.

The faint glimmerings of philosophical research have illustrated the fact of a Divine superintendence: yet as objects, in themselves beautiful, may appear terrific when indistinctly seen, it can excite no surprise to find that this truth, far from

being welcome, is one which man does not like to retain in his knowledge. Hence originated denials of the doctrine; or if allowed, deductions of the most melancholy character were inferred. Practical results were, open rebellion, or sullen submission.

The truth, clearly stated, and received as a permanent and operative principle in the heart, will conduce not more to ultimate safety, than present happiness. It will impart the security of a Theocracy, with the possession of peace that passeth understanding. Calamities and disappointments would then be accepted and esteemed as the bitter but medicinal draught. Gloomy apprehensions respecting futurity would be easily dissipated.

But are these opinions the spontaneous

production of the human mind? Are these sentiments readily embraced? If admitted, do they not require daily support? Like the fire which descended from the heavens, but was fed by the appointed priesthood, these principles must be strengthened in those bosoms where they exist.

Truth in the human heart is as a garrison in a hostile territory. Supplies must be sent in : deliverance is promised, and is certain. If no successful sortie can be made, yet the siege shall be raised with triumph and exultation. The day will declare it. In the mean time, assurances of this cheering result are offered on every hand. If any is ignorant on this subject, he is inexcusable : let him be ignorant. The order of nature declares and confirms that his hand ruleth over all. The invisible perfections of Deity, even

his eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen, as they have been from the very creation of the world, being understood by the things that are made: so that they are without excuse.

*Nations*, like large bodies of witnesses, too numerous to be either seduced, or to confederate in the cause of falsehood, have, in every successive age, borne, unwittingly, testimony on this matter. Babylon is not the only metropolis from whence the royal avowal has been made, that He doeth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?

There is no work so much a desideratum in the republic of letters, as a

providential history of any Country. Our own would to us be the most interesting, as it offers also amplest materials for elucidation. It were to be wished, devoutly to be wished, that one yet living, who is best qualified to give this Work to the world and the Church, would be prevailed on to undertake this pleasing labour. That She has thought of it, is *known*;—that she is qualified, is unquestionable;—and that she raised hopes, or at least excited wishes, on this subject, must be felt by all who have read, or shall read, the 38th Chapter of her “Hints on the Education of a Princess.”—O that this “hint” could be conveyed to her with effect! In the decline of a long and useful life, with talents and capacity unimpaired, she would do well to shew us, that no good word, of all that the Lord hath spoken, hath failed;—all hath come to pass.

The interference of this same Invisible Power on the *moral* state of society is signally conspicuous. St. Paul is raised up, qualified and sent to Athens, there to dispute with and convince the Literati of the day. In later periods, when Voltaire was writing his most pernicious, because most plausible work, our great moral luminary was, under an unconscious direction, preparing its efficient and equally agreeable antidote, in his *Rasselas*.

How would Horsley's talents, and even his temper, have wasted themselves as in desert air, had he lived in other times, than when infidelity and anarchy demanded that such a man should accept their challenge!—and they were defeated by *one* alone, though they had defied the *entire* camp.

To protect a nation, or moralize society,



is indeed worthy of the Supreme interference : and they who are wise, will regard these operations of HIS hands, and shall so be built up.

But there is a cause yet nearer his heart, and in which he more manifestly concerns himself,—the prosperity and extension of his own *kingdom*, which, like its Founder and Ruler, is unseen by the world at large. Its existence and its glory is within—is internal. Initiated in its hidden mysteries, a man possesses the true secret of transmuting all things into gold. While he will see the application of these principles to the Church Catholic throughout the world, there will be yet another appropriation, more beneficial, and more just. Every person's individual history is to himself, and to his immediate circle, of the highest interest. Matters

of vaster moment were transacting by the kings of Egypt, when Jacob and his household were chiefly occupied by the cruel necessity of sending Benjamin with his brethren, and by the prospect of famine :— yet the soliloquy of the Patriarch, and the recorded observance of God's dealings, are infinitely more valuable than the proudest and most permanent of their royal labours.—The Pyramids have gratified the idle, the curious, and the scientific. The registered preservation of the Patriarchal family has cheered the desponding, quieted the insubmissive, and revived the confidence of the faithful :—it combines permanence with extensive utility. The works of man will decay and perish : the word of God endureth for ever.

As the bereaved parent, many exclaim,

"All these things are against me!"—Were their eyes opened, the conclusion would be, "God meant it for my good." They would see mercy, whence now they only gather food for miserable dissatisfaction. Mungo Park, thousands of miles from his own country, solitary, distant from human succour, and fainting, through fatigue, on desert sands, and under a vertical sun, saw, as he lay exhausted on the arid ground, an ephemera lighting on a single blade of grass, the spontaneous and apparently useless production of the place: this sight so cheered him, that his spirits returned, his strength revived, and he pursued his journey, perceiving that His tender mercies are over all his works.

In the morning of life we are the dupes of unwise and illegitimate expectation. The enamelled prospects delineated

by hope, invite us abroad with cheerful vigour. The landscape so beautiful in the distance, on nearer approximation, presents ploughed lands of rugged surface; thorns and briars, which impede our progress; and some meandering river, whose wanderings, so agreeable to the eye in remote perspective, weary and deject the fatigued traveller. Disappointed and exhausted, we are like the deluded female who fled from obvious duties and mitigated sufferings to the greater difficulties and unmingled privations of the Desert. Nor did she obtain any relief, till the flattering vision of expectation had vanished; when she cried to HIM who delivered, and does deliver, and will yet again deliver.

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To



To lead persons to an acquaintance with themselves and their own affairs, has been the object of the previous detail. In scenes of affliction, the sentiments there illustrated have been the sweet solace of the writer's mind. He has invariably found, that events in his retired life, which were unpropitious in aspect, or mysterious in their language, have been messengers of favour, and tended to a consummation to be wished. With these views, he, from the loop-hole of retreat, looks at an agitated and tumultuous world. As darkness is dispelled, there appears confusion among the atoms which before fluctuated *unseen* in the atmosphere. Their manifestation ought not to distress the observer. It shall at length be clearly evident, that HE hath done all things well;—and

that the acclamation of angels and be-  
tified spirits is not more harmoniously  
sweet than correctly true—"Just and  
right are all thy ways, thou King of  
Saints."

As to what concerns himself, daily  
expecting the summons to leave this  
state,—where even the light of Goshen  
is but comparative, as enjoyed in con-  
trast with surrounding darkness,—he  
hopes that he shall pass safely and with  
composure through the regions of terror  
and tyranny; and, not fearing the wrath  
of the King, he shall then endure, as  
seeing HIM who is *Invisible*.

THE END.

*SURSUM CORDA.*



*R. Watts, Printer, Broxbourne.*







